

# Community Video Report

Spring 1974

Volume one, Number four

A publication of the Washington Community Video Center

## Cable TV comes to Adams-Morgan

While cable television for the metropolitan region is still caught up in hearings, reports, federal regulations, and public education, cable television for the Adams-Morgan section of Washington may become a reality on a limited scale within the next few months.

The Washington Community Video Center, acting on a tip from friends in the cable industry has obtained the most expensive parts of a coaxial cable distribution system for use in a proposed experimental neighborhood cable project.

The equipment, consisting of the amplifiers, modulation equipment, and other hardware, was virtually donated to the Center by Jefferson Cable vision of Charlottesville, Va., which had changed the tube-type equipment in their cable system to solid-state.

The Center announced the acquisition of the equipment and proposed plans for an Adams-Morgan Cable System to a packed house at a video screening sponsored by the Adams-Morgan Organization's Communications Committee on May 16.

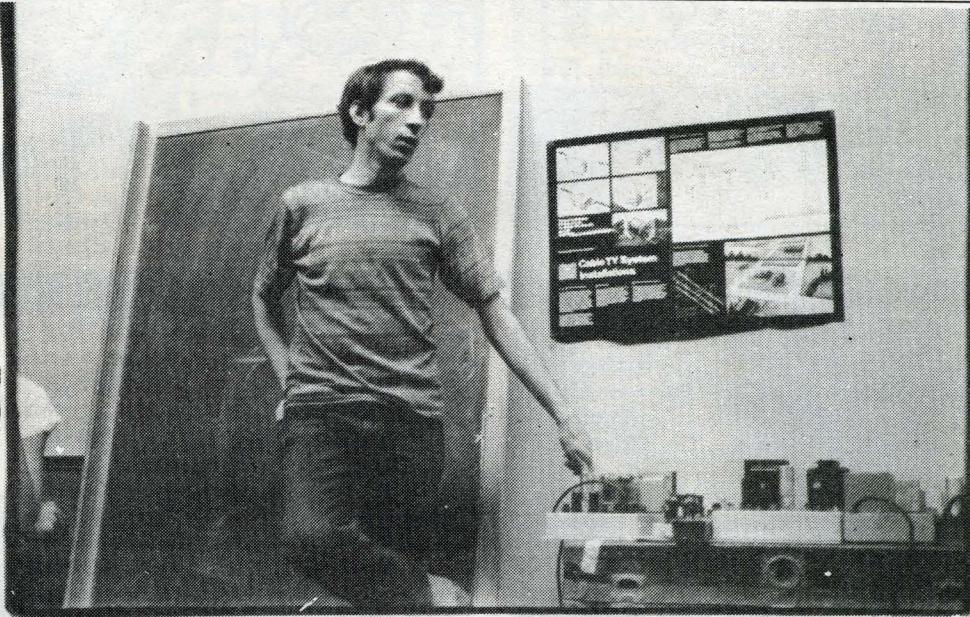
While the possession of some \$4,000 worth of cable hardware is certainly a step forward, there remain many problems before the experimental plan can be implemented.

This article is designed to explain the proposed plan, the problems we have to overcome, and the opportunities for members of the community to become involved in building this unique and exciting project for our neighborhood.

### Cable for Our Neighborhood?

Elsewhere in this issue we have tried to explain what a cable system is.

In simple terms, a cable system is a method



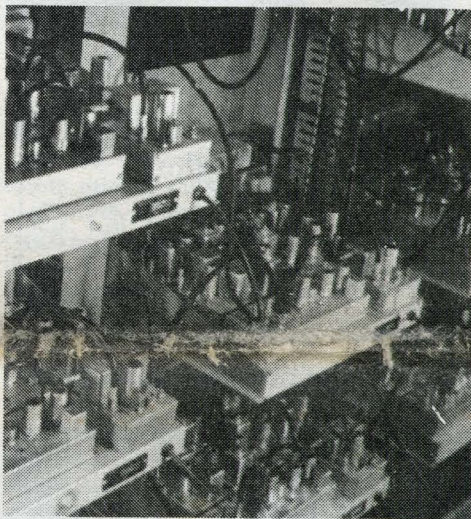
RAY POPKIN shows CATV head-end equipment donated by Jefferson Cable, Charlottesville at the Center on May 16 (top). Head-end equipment in an operating CATV system does the same thing—processes the video signals (bottom).

of using coaxial cable and amplifier to bring television, radio, voice, and other electronic information into TV sets located throughout a community. However, legally speaking, what we proposed for Adams-Morgan is not strictly a cable system, because:

- The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) defines a cable system as going to over 50 homes or locations, which we will not initially try;
- A cable system must also carry local, broadcast TV stations, which we will not do.

What we propose is the construction of a large, closed-circuit television system that could distribute programs—like the ones we currently make on videotape, as well as live programs—to a variety of locations in the Adams-Morgan neighborhood. This is similar to the closed-circuit systems at some universities and business buildings.

Our equipment will currently accommodate three channels. Any TV set could be hooked



up, providing we install a switch so that the set could continue to receive regular TV stations as well as the Adams-Morgan channels.

### What would happen on these channels?

That will, of course, be up to the community. We propose that this Adams-Morgan [See AMO, p. 2]

## Conflicts of interest

## CATV hubbub in Rockville

By Becky Clary

Cable television—an issue that “really tore this town up,” according to Rockville’s defeated mayoral candidate Frank Gospodarek—has created a controversy in the city that centers on two questions: 1) Is cable television economically feasible in Rockville? and 2) If it is feasible, who should own the CATV system?

As the second largest incorporated area in Maryland, as well as county seat of the nation’s wealthiest county, Rockville’s answers to these questions have political implications for the future CATV development throughout the Washington-Baltimore region. Pressure on the city government from a local cable corporation, Telecommunications for Rockville (telcoR), coupled with community antagonism towards telcoR, have clouded not only the answers but also the questions about Rockville cable.

TelcoR’s connections with the communications law firm which includes former FCC Commissioner Fred Ford, a member of several other cable corporations in the region, have raised some doubts about telcoR’s community base. TelcoR’s involvement in the city’s April 29 election, and its members’ influence in the city power structure, have also contributed to the climate of suspicion against cable in Rockville.

The issues of telcoR and CATV control have all but obscured the question of economic feasibility. While high population density (127 homes per mile) and a current lack of local communications media indicate a good potential market, clear and strong over-the-air signals from Baltimore and Washington explain why public support for CATV is small.

[See ROCKVILLE, p. 15]

## Wiley calls access ‘tremendous step forward’

This discussion was held near the Video Environment area during the NCTA Convention, which FCC Chairman Richard Wiley addressed. He consented to talk with representatives of video and access groups, and to be recorded on video and audiotape. The original videotape was done by Portable Channel, Rochester. The audiocassette was done by WCVC. There are no 18 minutes gaps, although it was a noisy hallway where the interview took place.

**MJ:** I guess, Chairman Wiley, I’d like to ask you about some of the things you said in your remarks at lunch, particularly those things which directly bear on access to the media by community groups. You made two

points: use of blacked out channel time on cable systems after normal broadcasting is ended, and the question of shared access. What is the Commission thinking about the future of the access channels—the public, governmental and educational access channels?

**Wiley:** I’d like to start out if I could by saying a little about my views on access generally. As far as broadcasting goes, I guess I’ve never been considered much of an access advocate, because I’d always thought broadcasting is a mass communications media, that it was important to keep it for discussion of controversial issues of public importance and not to turn it into a medium or environment for discussion of private disputes, private grievances, or just private expressions of views on issues that don’t have great public import.

And yet, I have seen time and time again this feeling that people want to get on the media, to say certain things, to express certain viewpoints, to have their own things on programming. Broadcasting, with its limited spectrum space, doesn’t seem to be the appropriate medium for it. I think that’s one of the great promises of the economy of abundance that cable presents: to have access channels. They tell me that maybe there won’t be that many people watching it, and that there will still be a demand for access to broadcasting, and I realize that.

But I think that in its own environment, if

we can make access work in cable, it can be a tremendous step forward. So I’d like to say starting out that I think access, from the standpoint of the electronic soapbox—the public access—and naturally the other access channels, could be a tremendous step forward if it’s properly utilized.

**ND:** The 1972 rules actually mandate that the access channels will only be granted as free for an experimental period of five years. We’ve gone through a couple of those years now, and of course, we are involved in that experiment. Can you share with us your views of what you think access so far has been like, and what you think it will have to be like by 1977 in order to have a strong endorsement by the Commission of the concept of public access?

**Wiley:** First of all, of course, we don’t know what the Commission will decide in 1977, whether the five years should be up, whether there should be a furtherance of that, whether access has not gotten sufficiently off the ground and therefore we want to have more free use. I don’t know just what they’ll approve. I wouldn’t say that access, from the analysis I have of it, has been an unqualified success throughout the country. I think that you have suggested that perhaps in some areas you haven’t gotten the stimulation of the operators yet to really try this system out, to really give this system its full flowering. In many places we see some really innovative and



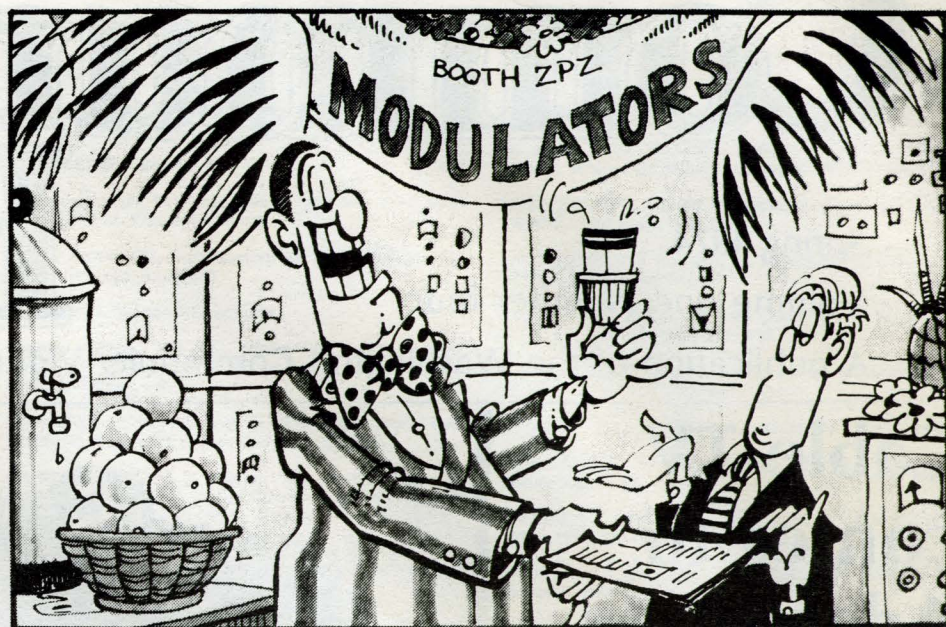
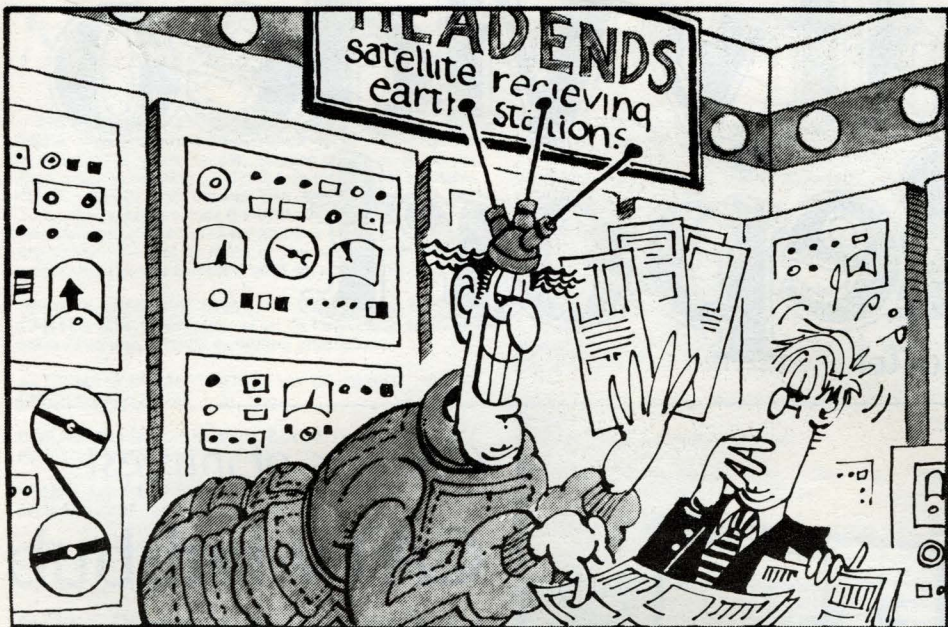
FCC CHAIRMAN Richard Wiley

exciting things being done. And so I think it probably varies, but I think it can be one of the great things that cable can bring—to allow people to use this medium in their own way, because everything in broadcasting has to be packaged. You don’t find indigenous groups who come on and develop the programming themselves, to actually be the programming themselves. I think that’s a very exciting thing. But I can’t say that I’ve come [See WILEY, p. 7]

## Inside CVR

What is cable TV?	2
Community Newstapes	3
New Software	3
WCVC Training Workshops	4
Arts	4
Hardware	5
Tele-Health Notes	5
Ted Ledbetter	6
Theory and practice of Community Video	8
New books	10
Metro cable round-up	14





## So what is this cable TV about, anyway?

Most of this article is based on a transcription of an interview with Mr. Tim O'Hara of Theta-Com Inc. We wish to thank both Mr. O'Hara and the other folks from Theta-Com who were so helpful in providing us with information.

For all the talk about cable TV, most people do not understand either what it can be used for, or the technical explanations of how it works.

Simply put, cable TV is a method of using cables and amplifiers to deliver TV pictures, sound and other electronic information into homes and offices.

However, there are many elements to a CATV system, which are detailed below:

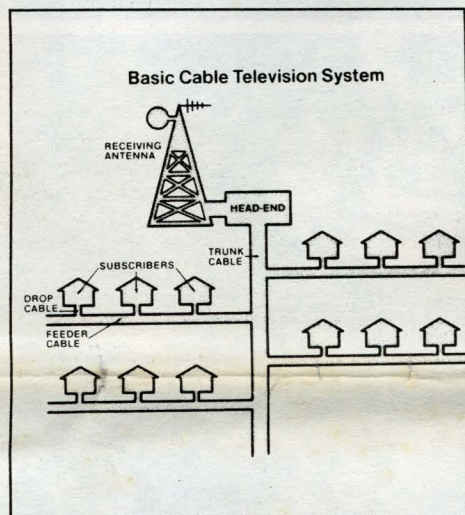
The head end site is the place where the signal is either received off the air by a master or high gain antenna or it can be received by microwave from a distant site. The signal is then brought down to a head end shack or building where the television signal is processed so that it becomes suitable, both in levels of signal from both audio and video carriers. Any other processing which is needed is also performed at the head end, so that the signal can be carried down the cables to the homes and be distributed.

There are several types of signal processors used. The heterodyne processor converts or can convert channels to a different frequency and arrange the frequency allocation of the cable system so as to take fullest advantage of its capacity. The heterodyne processor mixes any incoming signal with a local oscillator and can then convert the signal to any other frequency, that is to say channel six can be converted to channel 2 and so forth. This allows uhf signals to be transferred to vhf so that they can be more easily fed into the home receiver.

In a modulator demodulator system the incoming system is demodulated down to baseband video, which is the same type of signal which comes out of a video tape recorder or t.v. camera. The baseband signal is then

modulated, that is a new rf signal is added. In these systems the video and audio levels can be adjusted so that each channel will carry a signal of equal strength. The oldest and simplest system is the strip amplifier system.

In this system each signal is amplified as it comes in with no changes made in the rf signal. In all of the systems these separate channel systems are mixed together with any

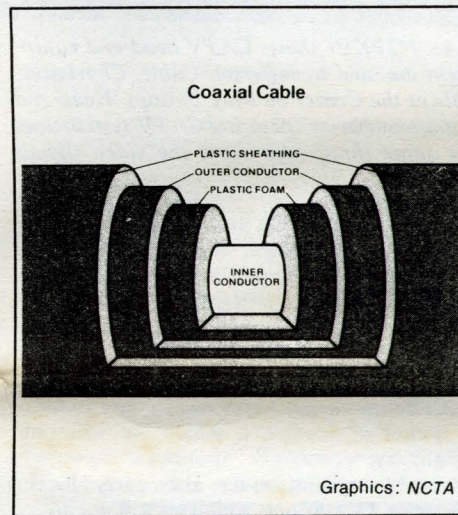


local origination signals such as public access, cable system originated programs, pay t.v., weather clocks, etc., this mixed signal is then channeled into a single co-axial cable to be fed downstream (down the system to the homes).

Once the signal is fed into the cable system the signal is amplified by what are known as broad band amplifiers which amplify the signals of all the channels equally as the signals are now combined. When the signal leaves the head end it is fed into a trunk line which is a large diameter cable having the quality of maintaining signal strength. The larger the diameter of the cable the less loss in signal strength as it travels long distances. This trunk line usually comes down the side of a mountain or from the top of a tall building

where the antennas are usually located.

About every half mile high performance amplifiers are located to keep the signal strength up and eliminate any distortion that might occur along the way. When the trunk line reaches the populated areas the signal must be fed into smaller lines which will feed the individual homes. These lines are called feeder lines. If these feeder lines were spliced



Graphics: NCTA

directly into the trunk the signal would be degraded so Bridger amplifiers are used. Bridger amplifiers isolate the trunk signal from the feeder lines and at the same time amplify the signal so that it does not lose strength. At each bridging point there are from two to four feeder lines running out.

These feeder lines then are "tapped," that is from these lines smaller lines called customer drops connect the homes with the feeder cable. Because each drop depreciates the signal strength in the cable amplifiers are used in the feeder lines as well. However only four amplifiers can be cascaded along one feeder cable without the signal becoming too distorted. An analogy to this would be the water system which features pumps along the water mains to keep the pressure up.

The key aspect of CATV is that it has potential for two-way transmission. In fact, this is required in cities making up the top 100 television markets. The same cable that brings the signal into the home can also return a signal back to the head end or some point in between, such as a hospital, police station, school, or office. The signals which come into the home are called forward signals and those which return are called reverse signals.

In areas where communities are close enough together to be served by one head end but too far apart to run a cable the full distance, microwave transmission is used. There is a multi channel multipath microwave transmission system called AML (amplitude modulation link) which is used to move the signal. That is the processed signal carrying all the channels of the cable system is transmitted from a microwave transmitter to a receiving dish on top of a hill or a building in the next town. From this receiver the signal is fed into a trunk line and distributed in the same way as it would be if fed directly from the head end.

—Ray Popkin

### READING LIST FOR CABLE TECHNOPHILES

Gary Weinberg *Cost Analysis of CATV Components* NTIS U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield, Va. 22151.

W.A. Rheinfelder, *CATV System Engineering* TAB Books Blue Ridge Summit Pa.

Verne M. Ray, *CATV Operators Handbook*, TAB Books

Theta Com, Inc. 2216 West Peoria Ave Phoenix Arizona 85068. Their descriptive equipment brochures explain many of the technical aspects of CATV components. They also distribute reports on their experimental two way computer assisted systems.

RCA COMMUNITY T.V. SYSTEMS 7355 Fulton Ave., Hollywood Ca. 91605 publishes large wall charts showing the design and installation of cable systems.

AMECO INC. P.O. Box 13741 Publishes a systems manual and a wall chart that outlines an entire city cable system.

SCIENTIFIC ATLANTA, 3845 Pleasantdale Road: Doraville, Georgia. Scientific Atlanta manufactures complete CATV systems and publishes a complete catalog of headend and distribution equipment.

## The cable is coming! The cable is coming! The cable is coming!

[AMO, from p. 5]

Cable System be governed by a board comprised initially of one representative from each of the organizations receiving TV Service. Thus, the programming could be directly linked to the viewers and the community.

We, of course, have many ideas about the programming. For one thing, the programming we are doing now, like *Community News*, will continue and increase once we have regular audiences and time-slots. Plus, any program produced at the Center or around the country could be played over the system on request (by phone, or in person). In addition, we could:

- Send health programs to the local clinic and Red Cross waiting rooms.
- Send programs for senior citizens to places like Barney Neighborhood House.
- Show community news at such places as laundromats, bars and other storefronts.
- Videotape and play back community meetings.
- Cablecast election information.
- Send various kinds of programs to neighborhood schools.
- Program for deaf and blind.
- Produce Spanish-language programs.

—Send out live meetings and announcements at regular times.

### Remaining problems

All of this and more is very exciting, but we have many problems to solve before this become a reality. They are legal, technical, financial, and "political."

The major obstacle will be crossing the city's streets with our cables. In Adams-Morgan most of the electric and telephone cables cross streets in underground conduits. Thus, we have to either make special arrangements with utility or phone companies, or petition the city government for an exemption to go overground for a year on an experimental basis. This requires political support in the community, which we will be seeking from you in the next months. Any other aid here is desperately needed.

The technical problems are considerable, too. For one thing, we still need the cable itself, which is costly. Plus, we need test-instruments, plugs, and other smaller hardware that mount up. We also need better modulators than we have now. None of us are engineers. Thus, while we have some volunteer help, we need more people who know about the technical side, and more

people who could physically install the system, once we get it completed.

The final question is "political." That is, where do we lay the cable, and who gets cable service. Most traditional cable systems go into people's homes. While we would eventually like to do this, our first plan is to try and interconnect community organizations that will use programming immediately, and public places where people gather.

Thus, the Communications Committee of AMO and the WCVC staff need to work hard

to try out different locations in the community with monitors and playback decks to evaluate the best location for the cable drops. If you are interested in having a cable drop in your organization, you should contact us immediately.

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE AMO COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE WILL BE THURSDAY, JUNE 20. Please attend this meeting at the Video Center at 8 p.m. and get involved in helping us build a community television system for Adams-Morgan.

## Community Video Report

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A quarterly publication of the Washington Community Video Center, Inc., 2414 18th Street, N.W. & P.O. Box 21068, Washington, D.C., 20009. Phone: (202) 462-6700. Staff Collective: Nick DeMartino, Grady Watts, Jr., Ray Popkin, Gerardine Wurzburg, Victoria Costello. CVR Editor: Nick DeMartino. Staff Writer: Becky Clary.

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# Community newstapes—antidote to TV news

By Gerardine Wurzburg

When we turn our TV sets on each evening to watch the news, we are given a pared down vision of what the "news" is, formulated by the organizations (networks) that produce it. In order to maintain its audiences' attention, the news is packaged so that the sports lovers will not be bored by the international news, and the people who thrive off weather maps will be kept tuned in by the lively and supposedly "human" banter of the newscasters.

The startling fact is that television is now both the chief source of news and the *most-believed source* of news for most of the population. Although to the normal viewer it all looks reasonable, the packaging of the news reveals a subtle distortion of facts, including footage of occurrences unrelated to the story, editing footage to tell the story with a particular slant, and editing a story as a form of social control.

A helpful book for educating television watchers on the news they are digesting is *News From Nowhere, Television and the News*, by Edward Jay Epstein (New York: Random House, 1974, 273 pages). The book centers on studying "the effect of the processes of a news organization on the news product." Based on research and interviews done during 1968-69, it provides an interesting background to news coverage of Vietnam, Nixon's arrival as president, and Agnew's attack on the media.

The important issue of television news is our understanding of the role of the communications medium in a "free society." The responsibility of the networks in producing news is part of the concept of public interest, as the FCC and the courts have defined it over the years, which broadly covers three areas.

The first premise is that the basic purpose of broadcasting is "the development of an informed public opinion through the dissemination of the public news and ideas concerning the vital public issues of the day." The second assumption is that these ideas and information come from diverse and antagonistic sources, and finally, it is assumed that broadcasting is a predominately local institution.

## WVCV Starts News Coverage of Adams-Morgan

Watching the TV news in Washington, D.C., it is clear that coverage of local news, including the Adams-Morgan area, is peripheral, and when done, portrayed incompletely, without research work to understand the history of an issue. So the few news issues that the stations carry about our neighborhood, tend to end up as visual teasers of short length, that heighthen out of proportion one aspect of an issue, and whose presentation is often in a vacuum that makes involvement of people impossible.

It was from this inadequacy of local news coverage that the Washington Community Video Center began experimenting with providing its own newstapes on the Adams-Morgan Community. As an additional aspect, AM has a large Spanish-speaking community, and our newstapes are in Spanish as well as English.



In this first month of experimenting we have tightened our direction, and are trying various means of distribution and involvement of the neighborhood in the production.

Our distribution has been based on two methods: the first source, is placing the monitor in our storefront window, with a speaker running outside, benches are placed on the sidewalk; the second, is bringing the monitor and playback deck to places that people normally congregate: including restaurants, community centers, and other neighborhood locations. As we try out distribution areas, we are evaluating each location's effectiveness. Gale Rebhan, a student at Antioch is working on this survey as part of her undergraduate studies. When we have our cable system installed (See article, p. 1), our distribution network will be more defined and permanent.

When preparing these newstapes, we are designing them within a time frame of ten minutes, so that we can put the tapes on ten-minute cassette loops, for continuous playback. Some of the tapes have been designed specifically for the Spanish-speaking community, whereas others are for the whole community. These broad issue tapes are dubbed in English and Spanish.

## Community Production

In conjunction with the Latin American Youth Center, Gerardine Wurzburg has begun training high school people from the Latin community, in video production. They are being trained to develop, write, and film, news on their community. Five high school men and women are involved in this, and meet three afternoons a week for training. When school is out for the summer they will be working full-time. Through a government program, they are being paid for this training at the Center.

## Our First Newstapes

The first newstape we did was decided upon on short notice. The Mayor was at a local elementary school, for the Arbor Day treeplanting ceremony. After that he was

approached by several citizens who were concerned about an incident of apparently unprovoked police brutality against an important community leader and her family.

In terms of shooting style, we are editing in the camera for most of the tapes because we want them to be seen immediately and do not want to make the newstape production tax our editing system. With these considerations, we are shooting within the camera, with results that are successful, since we are conscious of the sound and picture relations. This requires somewhat alert camera operators, and a great deal of coordination between the interviewer/sound operator and the person doing camerawork.

The next tape we did, was also done on short notice. Students from the Mellow Yellow school were boycotting the local Ben Franklin 5 & 10 cent Store. The store had started a policy that required children to be accompanied by an adult. The kids formed a

picket line, and boycott in response to the edict. In the tape there is a discussion between the woman who manages the store, and several of the kids. This tape was also played in our store window, in addition to being seen many times by the kids involved, and reporters from local newspapers.

A scripted tape was done in Spanish about several important Latin community institutions that many people are unaware of. Included was a short portrait of the Latin Youth Center, the free legal service group AYUDA, and a basic information graphic about places to learn English for free.

The next tape we did had a very specific focus. The D.C. City Council has imposed a temporary freeze on rents until August. A complete rent control bill is up for vote later this summer, and the housing issue has reached crisis proportions in Adams-Morgan. The tape is an account—through interviews with people involved in the housing issue on a community and citywide level, and a narration—designed to educate people in the community about their rights under the current rent freeze, and the importance of the Rent Control Bill. This tape was edited, and is available in English and Spanish.

## Future

The responsibility of attempting to provide a news service to your community is an immense one, that requires a commitment to researching thoroughly the issues, and a desire to unveil the feelings of the community on various issues. As we continue this experiment, we will keep you posted on the problems we run into, and involvement that develops from the community.

Probably one of the most valuable aspects of these newstapes, is the interchange it has opened between the Center and groups that we have been involved with in the tapes. This will lead to further involvement in the future.

**GAY AND LESBIAN VIDEO MAKERS FROM NEW YORK**

A get-together and videotape screening for Washington gay people, featuring showing of tapes by the following New York gay video makers: LOVE: Lesbians Organized Around Video Experience, Rudi Stern, GAA Video. Titles include: "Lesbians at Gay Price March, 1973," "Lesbian Musicians Jam," "Coming Out," and "Gay Price." Several of the N.Y. videotape artists will be present for a discussion following the screening.

**EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN AN OPEN CLASSROOM**

Using an edited video tape of an average day at Harvard Street School, we will look at the ways in which an open classroom environment affects the emotional development of children.

Workshop discussion will be led by parents and teachers of Harvard Street School in Adams-Morgan. Starts 8 p.m.

**13th FREE**

**20th**

**JUNE VIDEO**

**6th**

**27th**

**CABLE TELEVISION COMES TO ADAMS-MORGAN!**

Meeting of the Adams-Morgan Communications Committee to discuss progress being made on wiring up our neighborhood with cable television.

Open to the public. Discussion will begin at 8 p.m. We will also show recent Community Newstapes made in June.

**ALTERNATIVE ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES**

First screening of two videotapes: *Solar Foam Home*, which shows a house under construction in McLean utilizing polystyrene foam and solar heating. Interviews with owner and architect Roy Mason. Also, alternative technologies being developed in Adams-Morgan by Community Technology and Institute for Local Self-Reliance, who will co-sponsor the discussion.

**Every Thursday, 8 p.m. at WVCV storefront**  
**2414 18th St., NW**

## WVCV video tapelog: recent additions

In the past several months WVCV has produced a large number of excellent tapes that relate specifically to the Adams-Morgan community where our storefront is located.

**IT'S OUR PARK:** Recounts the history of Community Park West, a privately owned tract of land that citizens converted into a park over the last 10 years. The tape is being used to support the purchase of the land by the city, and establishing the tract as a permanent recreational facility. Produced by Grady Watts, the tape was edited from hours of footage, into a clear 7 minute piece that should be helpful to other groups concerned with the need for inner city parkland.

**EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE FREE SCHOOL:** A 1/2 hour edited tape on the Harvard St. School in Washington, D.C., a free school for children from the ages 5-9. This tape was done by Vicki Costello.

**COLUMBIA ROAD CHILDREN'S CENTER:** A visual account of the early morning

experience of the young child after the parent leaves them at the day care center. The tape was done for use in a workshop among day care teachers, and was also shown to the children. The Columbia Road Children's Center is a bi-lingual day care facility in Washington D.C. This 20-minute tape was done by Gerardine Wurzburg.

**Newstapes—**A listing of our first tapes on community news (see article on NEWS). Produced by Gerardine Wurzburg. All tapes are 10 minutes.

**ARBOR DAY:** Mayor Walter Washington comes to the H. D. Cooke School for the Arbor Day Tree planting ceremony, and is confronted by local citizens about a case of police brutality.

**NOTICIAS PARA LA COMUNIDAD LATINA:** This tape introduces people to several important institutions in the Spanish speaking community: The Latin Youth Center, AYUDA—free legal service, and

places to learn English. In Spanish.

**RENT CONTROL:** In Spanish and English. Explains the rent-freeze imposed by the D.C. City Council, and the issues involved in the Rent Control Bill that will be voted on soon. The tape tells about what tenants in Adams-Morgan are doing to fight the condominium conversion flood, and the struggle to get landlords to maintain buildings according to city codes.

Included in the tape are interviews with a member of the newly formed Adams-Morgan Tenants Union, the lawyer defending several tenants in landlord/tenant court, and the head of D.C. PIRG, discussing the citywide Housing Coalition.

**SELF-HELP:** A 1/2 hour tape produced with women from the Washington Free Clinic, and women from the WVCV: Vicki Costello and Gerry Wurzburg. Shows a patient coming in to be fitted for a diaphragm. Para-medic discusses with the patient her decision to have a

diaphragm, a medical history is taken, and a fitting is done. A very clear and helpful tape for women self-help groups, and clinics concerned with patient education.

**WOMEN AND SPIRITUALITY:** A tape by Vicki Costello done at a conference on the subject, at George Washington University. A total of one hour of programming: 1) 1/2 hour edited remarks by Dr. Rosemary Reuther, feminist theologian, on sexist ideology within Christianity; 2) 1/2 hour discussion on spiritual/feminist convictions, among four women: a Catholic nun, 2 ex-wives of ministers, and a college student.

**SOLAR FOAM HOME:** A tape that Nick DeMartino did with his students from Antioch College, at a home in a Virginia suburb designed by Roy Mason and built of polystyrene foam. It will be heated with solar collectors. Interviews with owner and architect.



# Video/improv: 'live' is the word

by Gerardine Wurzburg

The relation of video to performance media has long been that of documenting events (dance, theatre, etc.). The documents are records from an "all-seeing" perspective, aesthetic renderings that selectively place your vision on a certain area. In these relations, the camera and the raw material (the videotape) are used outside of the event, much like film.

When video is placed within the realm of planned or improvised movement, the synthesis takes the camera from the outside, and the dance from the outside of the camera, and integrates them, with both dancers and the videomaker conscious of the other. When this form is done alive, with a portable camera used in the improvisation, the dance/camera lady is integrated as a performer-with-a-special-attribute (the third eye), and the camera is feeding into a live monitor.

Live is the word to be with. To retain these images in a recorded form, is not the object. To record would mean that someone at a later date will watch the tape in an inactive position. To see and work only with live images, knowing there is no retentive power, reasserts the 'one time only' quality.

For the May 23rd Thursday night Video Screening Jack Halstead, who teaches improvisation, and Gerardine Wurzburg, a member of the WCVV staff, collaborated on a 'video/improv-improv/video' night.

An input tape was made prior to the performance. It had 11 scenes of varying lengths. Aside from Jack and Gerry, the six other people in the improvisation had never seen the input tape, and the only instruction was that they could not ignore the input.

In the design of the space, a live studio camera was located on one side, connected to a monitor. This camera was providing an overall perspective. In the center of the space was a large monitor, into which alternately the handheld camera was feeding, and the input tape was showing.

The input tape was turned on by the people involved, whenever any of them felt they needed more input. When the vignette was over, the live dancing camera would feed back on to this large monitor. The moments when this input was played provided an interesting occasion when the attention of both performers and audience was focused on the input tape.



MEMBERS OF THE improvisational dance troupe blend with the audience in the mirror image, while everybody watches an "input" videotape in a monitor above the mirror.

A live image displayed on another monitor to the right of this scene was fed from a roving portable camera.

The show—put together by WCVV staffer Gerri Wurzburg, dancer Jack Halstead & friends—was their first video/improv/improv/video. A much expanded live video event is scheduled for June 8 in the afternoon in Grace Church, Georgetown, in connection with the "For Free" Arts Festival. The public is welcome.

## Video at 'For Free' show, June 8

The WCVV, with support from our friends, is constructing an open video environment in conjunction with the 'For Free' Arts Festival June 8. Working with the element of time, through video loops, the environment is being designed so that people can come into for

## Gay video workshop packet available

Last November 30 through December 2 some thirty-five gay men and women gathered in Binghamton, N.Y., for a major Gay Video Workshop. Under the banner "We must direct our technology, or it will be used to destroy us," a variety of workshops, tape viewings, discussions and social events was held. A list of conference participants, a partial list of available tapes on gay subjects, and other materials are available from conference organizer David Sasser, 70 8th Avenue, Apt. 2B, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217. Sasser and other N.Y.-based gay video people are planning a more comprehensive update on gay video activity. If you'd like to add to or receive, please contact David.

play-exploration of some of the most fundamental qualities of video: playback, both simultaneous and delayed.

Two arcs with monitors and playback units will provide time-delays of different lengths. One arc will carry only the feed off one camera, and the other arc will be mixed through the SEG from the two cameras facing into the arc, and the camera at the end of this 'tunnel,' providing a real-time overview. Two box inter-connected with cameras and monitor and sound, also fed into an SEG, will allow people to play with the varying elements of split screens carrying different parts of the body, and other interchanges. An isolation booth, not connected to anything outside, will have a camera and monitor in it, so that people can go in and see themselves on TV, alone.

After this environment has been going for several hours, it will be turned out, and become part of a performance of video/improvisation. Again a live camera will be part of the group. The element worked with for this will be that of time: present, and time delayed (past), as seen through monitors hanging in the area.

## Center gets grant to produce tapes about DC artists

The National Endowment for the Arts has awarded a \$10,000 grant to WCVV, to produce a series of video portraits on Washington-area artists. The video tapes will emphasize the process by which they use their particular medium and the environment in which they develop their works. Gerardine Wurzburg is the project director.

The tapes will concentrate upon the artists' actual working milieu by following them from conceptualization of a work through completion (or change in direction)—all with the intent of demystifying to laymen audiences the act of creativity. Different artists—both individuals and groups—and different media, will be explored in this series. Distribution will focus on a package (possibly 'The Washington Arts Community') to cable systems, museums, universities, and other interested groups. They will be distributed in ¾" cassette, and ½" reel-to-reel.

Work on the series has begun, and is scheduled for completion July 1975. If interested please contact: Gerardine Wurzburg at the WCVV. Complete the form on p. 16 (WCVV Arts Questionnaire) if you would like to be kept posted on the project.

## Arts Endowment media grants set

The National Endowment of the Arts announced that 109 grants totaling \$1,285,581, have been awarded for fiscal year 1974 by the Public Media Program. Many of these grants have already been made, many are recent. They fall into five categories: programming in the arts, media studies, regional development, general programs, and pilot programs. They cover cable television, broadcast television and radio, film, university and other institutional activity.

Among the grants recipients:

—Rudi Stern of Global Village for "continuing research and development of multipleimage processing with direct video synthesis" (\$10,000).

—Cable Arts Foundation, N.Y., to "assemble, produce and distribute nationally for cable television a ten-program series on the independent film" (\$44,788).

—Council of Southern Mountains "for production of three films on Mountain artists by Appalshop, Whitesburg, Ky. (\$23,270).

—Open Channel, N.Y., "further development of cultural programming produced within the NY prison system for distribution on cable television" (\$10,000).

—The New Classroom, Washington, to produce *Black Box*, cassette-based audio poetry magazine.

—Antioch College, Baltimore for workshops on aspects of half-inch video technology (\$9,800).

—National Association of Media Educators, in Washington, for a conference last December about summer institutes for film teachers (\$10,000) and general support (\$50,000).

—Michael Hall, Ipswich, N.H., for research on secondary school media education in New England (\$3,000).

—Electronic Arts Intermix, New York for "partial support of a survey which will determine the potential scope and economic feasibility of distributing the work of video artists and subsequently, establishing a pilot operation based on the survey (\$10,000), and a conference last January at the Museum of Modern Art (\$10,000).

—Global Village, N.Y., for an interdisciplinary arts program in the Soho area of NY (\$10,000).

—People's Communications Network, NY "for production of videotape series for cassette and CATV distribution exploring black culture in Harlem."

—TP VideospaceTroup, for a tour throughout Midwest (\$15,000).

—Alternate Media Center's pilot apprenticeship program with CATV systems (\$101,105).

This list isn't exhaustive, but illustrates some of the video-related activities supported by the Endowment this year. Their address: National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C. 20506.

# WCVV Summer video training workshops

By Vicky Costello

In every past issue of the *Community Video Report* there have appeared a few lines mentioning ways people and groups within our community could use our neighborhood video facility and services. For some, involvements with WCVV take the form of using the free video theater space here at our storefront on Thurs. nights for group workshops and meetings or taking of one of our video training courses which are offered regularly.

The various levels of involvement between WCVV and Adams-Morgan share a basic goal to bring about better neighborhood dialogue about the news, issues and events of concern to those living and working in the community. Our efforts at developing community news and video distribution are detailed elsewhere.

In order to truly reflect the concerns of our area with all of its diverse peoples we hope that more neighborhood residents will become aware of the ways video can be used within the community and possibly plug into some of the programming production. This is not to say that everyone in Adams-Morgan should become a video technician and/or producer. That would be an impractical notion. The goal we see is much simpler: for video to facilitate more community interaction. We want to show more people how to use our ½" portable video technology to report, docu-

ment and express our news and feelings to each other. In order for this to develop, a few things must happen, at the same time. More people need to become aware of the existence of Community Video; some can become involved in the production of community videotapes, but the more general need is for the media, and our Community Video process specifically, to be demystified for us all.

This is mostly a matter of learning the rudiments of what the technology involved is (even if only to recognize it when one sees it), and most important, of gaining an awareness of the possibility for autonomous production and control of our own information; that is, self-expression. What it comes down to is realizing that no one is just going to come in and report about what's happening here without community involvement in that news process. In fact, the goal is for community groups themselves to be actively involved in these productions, by either reporting of the relevant information to those making the tapes or by more actively producing the tape, themselves, or with our assistance.

## Training Now in Process

In order to help more community people learn how to produce tapes we're also encouraging more neighborhood residents to take advantage of the basic video skills

courses we are offering again this summer. We are presently running two courses, one on Sat. mornings and the other on Tues. evenings.

A new series of training workshops will begin this month at the Center. They are open to all members of the community, especially to residents of Adams-Morgan and members of community organizations.

The next Saturday morning class will begin June 22. The Tuesday evening class will start July 9. Additional times for the rest of the summer are listed on the sign-up form below.

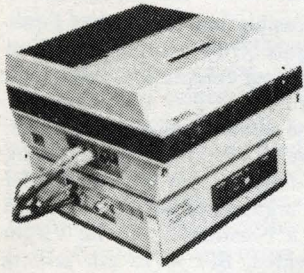
The rate for participation in these classes is \$50 per person for the 6-week class as a minimum rate, unless severe financial need can be shown. A rate of \$75 per course will be charged to anyone capable of paying, and particularly to those who can have their organization pay it. The reason for this sliding scale is that many people from outside Adams-Morgan who have greater than moderate income have enrolled for our workshops. We feel they should pay according to their ability.

One of the workshops now being conducted is composed entirely of women. An intermediate women's class will be offered beginning July 15 at 6:30.

Nobody will be able to start these workshops without filling out the Registration Form on page sixteen.



# Hardware report: selecting systems, portapaks



Sony AV-8600

By Ray Popkin

## Selecting Your Video System

We have been giving a lot of thought to system building lately, in light of the fact that one's dreams always end up out-stripping equipment capability. Sooner or later most people into video want to get into color or broadcast or both. At this point one is either faced with scrapping their whole system and starting again or merely building onto what they have. Sometimes the "but-we-don't-need-that" item costs little more than the bottom line piece of equipment.

For instance, Sony has just come out with a color portapac called the 8400. Without the color playback adaptor the unit can probably be purchased for only \$100 or \$200 more than the old black-and-white portapac (3400). You might figure that you just aren't going to be able to afford color so you figure on saving a few hundred bucks. Then suddenly a \$1000 color camera hits the market which you decide you could afford, but you would also have to dump your portapac, for several hundred dollars less, and buy a new one which will probably have gone up in price by that time. (Portapacs have risen \$200 in the last year or so.)

This is the same when it comes to switchers, studio cameras, and editing decks. Folks trying to break into broadcast are finding

it's best to keep your wildest fantasy in mind. It is also best to seek lots of opinions and advice from a variety of sources. Often times when people want to buy equipment they call one of the major companies or a distributor and ask for their advice. While there are many equipment retailers who will give you good sound advice, and take the time to explain how things work, many others will not. Many salesmen get a better price break from one company than another, or get a discount if they buy in greater volume. Thus, they will heavily lean toward pushing one line even if it may not be the best system for you.

So talk to the user, get many opinions, try and read up on the market. Even those who have used the stuff for a long period of time still disagree on various things. It might be just a matter of one little feature that one person likes and another doesn't. Don't base your purchase on one friend's experience, ask several. Then talk to several different distributors, and look for more than the best price. Find out what kind of service they provide and find out from their customers how long it takes to get equipment repaired. Make sure it's the kind of distributor who can take time to answer questions and who really cares about having you as a customer.

We have decided not to name names, but one piece of advice is that the small dealers with their own repair services will generally provide better service than the large companies who are after the mass sale bids from industry and government. Some of these companies don't like to take orders for less than twenty machines at a time, and will refuse to sell a small item such as a cable or a take-up reel at all. In the long run it may be worth it to pay someone a few bucks to come in and help you design and purchase your system than to struggle with it alone and make costly mistakes.

## Heaps o' Hardware

We are now trying to arrange with some manufacturers to let us do a little more field testing of equipment so that we can pass



Sony AV/AVC-3400

We also could use the feedback of our readers. Let us know of your experience and what little tricks you have found to solve problems, modify things, etc. Seems everytime you meet someone there is some little thing they have found that could save another's sanity.

This spring has been the big season for new equipment, five or six new time base correctors, half a dozen portable color camera systems, automated editing systems, and new cassette equipment. On top of the heap the two new Sony three quarter-inch systems, which look pretty good, and on the bottom the Sony 8650 half inch editor, which just doesn't seem worth the money.

## Portable Systems

We mentioned the JVC Color porta-pac in the last issue. We know little more about it now, except that we shot a little tape at the NCTA in Chicago and played it back at home on a Panasonic 3130 and found stability and compatibility to be quite good. The big test for color cameras is to see what they can do outdoors and we have not had a chance to test any of them outside yet. The nice thing about the JVC camera is that it has a needle in the viewfinder that tells you when you need to adjust the aperture. Thus you can change your lens opening accordingly as you pan around. This is valuable in color as the viewfinders all have black and white pictures which will not tell you if your colors are way off, due to light change.

The Sony \$5000 color camera seemed quite good, though a little expensive. As far as the portable cameras go I would probably lean towards the Sony or the new Panasonic, which has not yet quite reached the market. Sony also makes a less expensive camera but it does not match the \$5000 model. Hopefully we will get our hands on both and let you know.

The biggest surprise was the Sony 3/4 inch color portable recorder. While you might not want to hold it on your back for too long, it was fairly compact and comes with a little shopping cart type of thing that you can roll around.

The Sony 8400 half-inch deck we tried with an Akai color camera. The recorder threads itself if you use a twenty minute reel or takes a manually loaded half-hour reel. It can record in color without bringing the color playback unit. The playback unit need only be used when playing the tapes. The camera was not

adapted for the portapac so it was connected to a monitor which fed into the deck. (System supplied by Tom Meeks and Sam Adwar.) With a better method of feeding the camera into the system you could have a color portable system for less than \$5,000 (the 3/4 inch system will be about \$8,000). While the camera was not the greatest, we recorded pictures off the air and got close to perfect reproduction of the Saturday morning cartoons. The Panasonic color adaptors for their portapacs are readily available now, so that the same type of system can be built around their portapacs.

## Editing: Almost, Not Quite

When we heard about the Sony 8650



Akai VTS-110 DX

coming out, we thought this was going to be it, since the Sony 8600 was so good. Well, it has flying erase heads, which insure cleaner edits that have a better chance of holding up in multi-generation copies. It has video-only insert, without the need for any modification. But it does not have solinoid controls. This last fact is the ultimate frustration. In simplistic terms a solinoid control means that the edit, record, play, and rewind buttons function by electronic power rather than muscle power. When they are pushed, an electronic action is activated rather than a mechanical one. Why the big deal? Virtually all the automated editing consoles built for

Panasonic NV/WV-3082



JVC PV/GS-4500

Graphics: Petersen's Guide to Video Tape Recording

similar problems. Certain multi-camera switchers (special effects generators: SEG) do not produce good enough quality switches to pass through a time base corrector, which is needed to make half-inch tape broadcast compatible. So when you build your system

along to our readers more authoritative information. You really need to use a piece of equipment for a few weeks before you really get to know its failures and fortunes.

By Ray Popkin

## Video Psychiatric Study Group

The Video Center in cooperation with Video Resources just finished a two-part intensive workshop with a group of area psychiatrists. The group has formed an organization called the Video Psychiatric Study Group of Washington D.C. While the use of video is not new in the psychiatric profession, it has not been readily used in private practice. In the past equipment has been expensive and cumbersome, and also required a separate operator. The workshop concentrated on simple equipment that could be easily modified for unobtrusive use in a small office setting.

Modifications of portable equipment such as the Sony or Panasonic portapaks allow the cameras to be mounted on the wall or a tripod and monitored separately. Some therapists prefer to hand control the camera without having it become an obstruction between them and the client. To do this the camera stands on a tripod behind the therapist with a handle coming forward over the shoulder, thus allowing the camera to be moved while being in front of the camera rather than behind it.

To a certain extent the uses of video in therapy seem obvious; the client is taped and then gets to see himself. Through this process a lot comes to light—body movement and position, tone, etc. We have heard reports of a

long-term experiment in Ann Arbor, Mich. where video has been used in counseling with prisoners and students. The counselor and client would view the tapes stopping throughout and stating what was going through their minds at each point. Moments were viewed and expanded. Findings showed that in the high school program in which the process was used the drop-out rate was reduced considerably. We are hoping to get a write-up of the project soon and will pass along more information next issue.

There are more exciting uses of video possible in the mental health field. One such use is patient-produced videotape. Have you ever looked at a videotape made by kids? Every time there is an adult in the picture you are either looking up at their face or you're looking at their waist. The point here is that the camera point, it's a kid's point of view, shows us something we have long forgotten, the looking-up factor. The spill-over is obvious: video affords the possibility of seeing the patient's point of view. Very revealing tapes have been done about such things as the

ward from the patients' perspective, and video interviews of other patients and staff. Its use in psycho drama is also unlimited.

In the future, if funding ever permits, we hope to make a videotape on mental health and the environment in a specific inner-city neighborhood. While our main purpose would be to show city officials how unhealthy environments can cause serious emotional damage to children growing up in the inner city, the tape will also be useful to clinic and hospital staff dealing with such problems.

## Health Education Media Association Meets

The worst thing about the workshop on patient education at the HEMA convention in Atlantic City last March was that it ended. This was the first time for several people who have read or heard about each other to actually see each other face-to-face. Communication between health educators is poor at best. Hopefully, this new organization will facilitate greater communication and sharing of programming and ideas. Unfortunately the conference was held in the middle of the gas crunch, cutting attendance considerably.

helical scan machines must be used with solinoid controlled machines. The only one we know of (spectra-vision) that can be used with a mechanical deck requires expensive modifications. The Panasonic 3130 can be modified for the insert and both it and the Sony 3650 can be modified for vertical-inter- [See **HARDWARE**, p. 13]



Sanyo VTC 7150 non-EIAJ 1/2" cassette

# tele-health notes

Perhaps the most enjoyable speaker was Allen D. Spiegel, PhD., who is an associate professor in the Department of Environmental Medicine and Community Health at the State University of New York, Downstate Medical Center. Dr. Spiegel was asked to assist in developing a patient education program in a Massachusetts hospital. In order to better ascertain the patient information needs, patients were interviewed when they entered and left the hospital. When asked what kinds of things they would like to know about their health or about such things as post-operative care on leaving the hospital, patients demonstrated a need for the most basic types of information.

Such questions as "what did they remove in the operation I just had?" or, "how long do I have to wait until I can take a bath?" were not infrequent questions.

Many patients felt that doctors were too busy and too important to take time to respond to such questions and thus they were never asked. When queried about this phenomenon some doctors questioned responded with "I didn't know they wanted to know things like that." Just as the video movement is playing a key role in the demystification of T.V., it seems likewise that an intensive consumer effort is needed to demystify medical care.

Robert E. Potts, PhD. of the Medical Audio Visual and Television Center, Ohio State [See **HEALTH**, p. 14]



## Theodore Ledbetter talks to CVR:

## D.C. Black group to use UHF station for pay-TV

*Theodore Ledbetter is a person whose name comes up frequently in discussions concerning communications matters, especially if those matters include things like the development of cable television in the cities, participation by blacks and other minority group members in the ownership of media. As a communications consultant in his own company—Urban Communications Group—and as one of a handful of black leaders in the field, Ledbetter has had a major impact on spreading the gospel to both his black brothers and sisters, as well as the communications community at large. The gospel for Ledbetter has been: control of media means ownership. Early last year he was in the final running for the FCC seat that eventually went to Benjamin Hooks, first black ever appointed to that agency.*

Community Video Report talked with Ted Ledbetter on May 22 about his theories, as well as his own business ventures in the communications industry.

**CVR:** I think that most people who have gotten into broadcasting and cable issues have probably come across your name at one time or another, particularly in terms of ownership of media by minority groups. Now you've gotten into some of that yourself. Could you comment upon some of the things you've been doing during the past year?

**Ledbetter:** The last year or so I've worked both in cable and in broadcasting. A little over a year ago I helped put together a group that just missed by one vote on the City Council getting a cable franchise for the city of Memphis, Tenn. In August a group with which I'm involved—Inner City Cable—got a second city-wide cable franchise for the city of Atlanta. Prior to that time there had been one franchise granted in Atlanta to a subsidiary of Cox Cable. They have a system with about 3,500 subscribers in the Northeast part of Atlanta. So the city granted two city-wide franchises. Our group is five black guys, four of whom are in Atlanta. I'm the fifth one. We've got that, but we can't start construction or anything until the cross-ownership problem with Cox is resolved. Cox is involved with cable, newspaper, radio and television in Atlanta, and there is a petition at the FCC on behalf of the Justice Department, dealing with that kind of cross-ownership.

In July of last year I put together of primarily D.C. residents—again an all-black group—to look at and consider purchasing a VHF, network-affiliated television station. In October this group did decide to go ahead and buy that television station. The station is WBMB-TV, Channel 10, based in St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The station's been on the air for 13 years and is an operating area covering all the U.S. Virgin Islands, part of the British Virgin Islands and the Eastern part of Puerto Rico. We have submitted our application to the FCC for transfer of that station to us. It was submitted in March and is currently pending before the FCC. We expect to receive Commission approval sometime this summer and actually take over ownership of that station. The group that I'm referring to is called District Communications, Inc., and is a D.C.-based corporation. All the people involved are D.C. residents, except for a few friends from the Virgin Islands itself.

The other activity that I'm involved in is Channel 50, the last remaining commercial allocation in Washington. That's something I've been working on now for about 2½ years. It's a UHF television station that was originally granted in hotly contested, competing hearings to Theodore Granik, who used to produce the *Youth Wants to Know* and *American Forum of the Air* programs. Granik died around 1968... and the construction permit for the station was put into bankruptcy so it could be liquidated and the money would go to his estate. A friend of mine bought that at the bankruptcy auction and asked me to join him. Over the last two years what has resulted is a corporation called Channel 50, Inc. which is currently applying for the transfer of that construction permit from the estate of Granik.

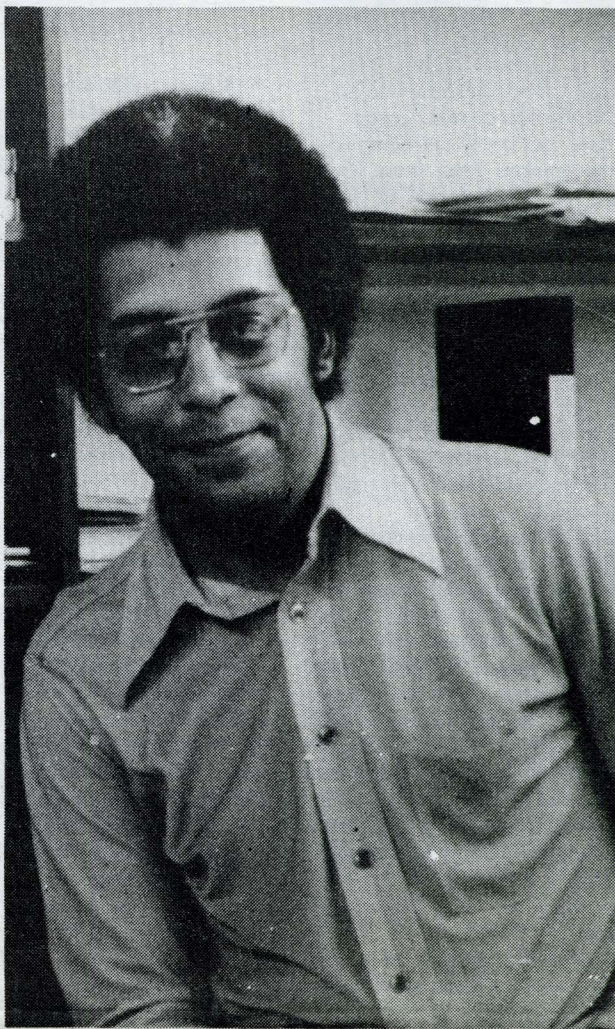
We hope to put Channel 50 on the air sometime in the next 24 months, probably in early 1976. The station will be a new station, and as such, isn't like our station in the Virgin Islands. Incidentally, District Communications and Channel 50, Inc. are two separate corporations and are two separate investor groups, but both basically D.C. people. Channel 50, Inc., has as its largest investor group the Modetco Investment Co., which is part of the Model Cities Economic Development Corporation. Modetco is what we call a MESBIC, minority business enterprise—SBIC (small business investment corporation). This was a station that was never constructed, since all the equipment was taken back by the manufacturers when Granik died, there is no plant. So we've been negotiating for the last year for tower space, equipment, etc. We think we've located a suitable tower. . . . It is the same tower that Channels 20 and 26 are on. We expect to go on that tower, and we expect Channel 32 to go on that tower.

Incidentally, Channel 32 is the last remaining educational allocation for the Washington market. That was applied for in early January by Howard University, and I think that everyone involved in that application expects that within the next 30-60 days the FCC will grant a construction permit to Howard University for that station.

**CVR:** You've talked now about two new channels that D.C. residents will be able to pick up on their home TV sets. There are some other changes, too, I understand. Could you comment on those?

**Ledbetter:** I don't know if I can comment on changes, because I think that most of us recognize that even when Channel 14 was on the air it wasn't a big part of our lifestyles.

But what the FCC did in April was to revoke the licenses for Channels 14 in Washington and 24 in Baltimore, which were held by United Broadcasting, which was owned by Richard Eaton, who also owns WOOK radio. They took those stations away from him because he didn't put them back on the air after being dark for some time. As far as I know, those channels are open to be applied for by anyone who wants to, at the FCC. As far as I know, they are vacant channels.



Theodore Ledbetter

**CVR:** You've talked in the past about your plans to finance Channel 50 through subscription television over the regular broadcasting, which seems to be a fairly new concept. Could you tell us a little about your plans?

**Ledbetter:** Actually subscription television over the air is not that new a concept. The basic rules are contained in a FCC Report and Order, which was published in the *Federal Register* on December 21, 1968. That *Federal Register* contains the background and experience of several experiments, primarily Hartford, Conn., where there was an RKO station and Zenith Radio, which produces television sets, that were offering subscription television service. That was a three-year test that demonstrated that subscription television over the air would in fact work, though there were some problems.

The idea kind of got lost as cable television grew and grew as an industry. When we first had the opportunity to get involved in Channel 50, we said no. Frankly, we didn't see any way to profitably construct a new television station in a market like Washington, where you already have four VHF stations and two UHF's. At that time there were three UHF's, and we didn't see anyway you could make it, competing for advertising dollars. Especially if we would aim the majority of our programming at a black audience. The advertisers simply will not buy black in television. They buy it in radio. They are reluctant in print media. And they just don't buy it at all in television. . . . The logic on their part is why should we advertise aimed at a black audience when blacks read the white publications and watch the white programs anyway.

We changed our minds about Channel 50 when we looked at the feasibility of subscription television, because using subscription television, we no longer have to depend upon advertising revenues. What it means is that is we program a station that is interesting enough to our audiences—and I'm including everyone in the metropolitan area, not just blacks—then we think that people will be willing to pay something extra for that programming which is of interest to them. That's the way we intend to support ourselves.

The technique for doing that is to scramble the broadcast signal during part of the broadcast day. So that if you tune in Channel 50 during the scrambled part of the day, you'd get some fuzzy lines on your TV set. In order to unscramble the set, you'd have to lease a de-coder from us. The de-coder would clear up the picture. I suppose that most of the programming initially will be motion pictures and sports, very similar to what cable television is looking to do with pay cable.

The other thing that's important to this: from a historical perspective, most of the entertainment and information we have gotten in both print and broadcasting has come about because we have been willing to pay specifically for that product. The best example in recent years has been motion pictures.

**CVR:** That brings up two possible objections that I see. Number one, aren't you ripping us off by charging us? And then the arguments by your broadcast competitors that aren't you destroying so-called Free TV?

**Ledbetter:** The basic response about paying of television programming is: Number one, we're not talking about having people paying for any program they now get for free, OK? I understand the anti-siphoning arguments put forth by the broadcasters. I'm about to be a broadcaster in the Virgin Islands, so my loyalties are divided. But we're not talking about taking the World Series or *Maude* or *All in the Family* or any program you now see on TV. We're talking about specialized kinds of programming. Motion pictures, right after distribution in theatres. We're hoping they will be allowed to go directly from the theatres to pay broadcasting and pay cable, and then to the networks. So, if somebody doesn't want to pay to see it, they can wait till it comes to the networks and the local stations anyway.

## Pay TV requires changes

**CVR:** Does that rely upon the FCC changing its rules?

**Ledbetter:** Yes and no. Right now, the rules, in fact, are more restrictive for over-the-air pay television than for pay cable. We're hopeful that, if the FCC relaxes the rules for pay cable, they'll relax them for us. But we honestly feel that if we were allowed to show movies over-the-air for pay at the same time they were shown over the networks for free that there would be enough people who would be interested in paying for them that they would be interested in paying for them that we would feel quite comfortable in doing that.

For one thing, people will want to see programming at a time that's convenient to them. When a movie is shown on network television, you either have to watch it when it's being shown, or you miss it. It might be shown the following year, but if you miss that, the same thing. We're talking about showing the movie enough times so that you don't have to adapt your lifestyle to the TV. You can select a time when you want to see and it will be there.

The other argument is what about people who can't afford to pay for it? Aren't you ripping us off? . . . The other thing is that the cost-per-person will be lower over pay television than it would be for the live event. . . . The larger the family, the lower the cost-per-person. If you talk about a family that goes to the movie theatre and there are four members of the family at \$2.50/person, that's \$10. Then there's parking, babysitters, meals, popcorn. With pay TV, everyone can sit at home and watch it for one admission charge. . . .

**CVR:** You have mentioned that the subscription TV would financially support other kinds of programming on your station. Could you tell us what that means, particularly regarding public affairs and news programming for the black community in D.C.?

**Ledbetter:** As part of the requirement for getting subscription television authorization from the FCC, the station has to broadcast for free the equivalent number of hours that a television station has to broadcast to be on the air anyway. It's a formula. What it amounts to is that by the fourth year we have to broadcast a minimum of 28 hours a week for free. Our plan is to take a time period, like—perhaps, since this is an estimate right now—like 5 p.m. to 7:30 every evening to broadcast for free that everyone can tune into. This would be news and public affairs programming. Under the FCC rules, that programming can be sold on an advertising basis. Our plans are such that the income from pay television operations will be able to subsidize the production of that news and public affairs program.

We want to do that programming, because, quite frankly, I am not happy about the way in which the existing media, both print and broadcast, deal with the problems of black people in this area. I'm not sure that whites in any particular community are happy with the way they are treated. A television station only has a certain amount of time for news and public affairs. This is a market of over a million TV homes, throughout several counties and Washington, D.C. I'm not sure that any TV station can cover all those, except for the major events. I think that all of us, black and white, suburban and urban, get kind of skimmed over. . . .

What we would like to do is to use that news and public affairs time slot to cover with some depth the problems and interests and needs of various communities in and around Washington. I think if we are subsidizing this from pay TV income—and we can't guarantee this will be done, though we think we can—then we don't have to program to the maximum audience. We won't have to worry about ratings. We can target in each night on a specific community within the Washington area, cover each individual part in more detail than any commercial competitive station can.

**CVR:** Would your technical capability in your station allow you to use more in the way of portable production equipment?

**Ledbetter:** Yes, we expect to use at least 1" videotape, and hopefully, as the technology advances, portable half-inch videotape equipment with the addition of a time-base corrector. To give you an example, the Virgin Islands station currently uses 1" videotape for its network programming because there is no direct feed from CBS to the Virgin Islands. It's taped in Florida on 1" tape, and shipped by airplane to the Virgin Islands where it's shown on a 1-week delayed basis. . . . That station does use a CVS 504 time-base corrector and uses it with half-inch. It works quite well.

[See LEDBETTER, p. 11]



# Conversation with a Wiley Chairman

[WILEY, from p. 1]

to the conclusion being totally satisfied that access has reached the millenium but I don't think I expected it to be.

**MJ:** What do you feel the problems are?

**Wiley:** Well, of course, money is one of the problems. I've talked, for instance, to Thea Sklover (of Open Channel in New York) who has suggested that some funds should actually be poured into this thing from the operating fees in order to provide revenues to put on the programming. And of course, everybody's for that, of course, except if the 2% comes out of their particular bailiwick. I don't know if that's the answer, or whether if people haven't gotten used to using this system; they don't know that it's available; they don't know how to use it; they don't have the experience. We haven't developed people like yourselves sufficiently throughout the country that can provide the kind of expertise, really the impetus to make use of this.

**MJ:** Of course, from our point of view, one of the problems is reluctance on the part of the cable operators to truly support it. In Los Angeles, for instance, we've negotiated the opening of the access channels, but they aren't at all promoting it.

**Wiley:** I suppose to some extent you could put that down to two things: one, the maturity of cable and its development, and number to the economic problems, frankly, that the cable industry has had. This doesn't seem to be an area in which they see economic revenue flowing directly. But I think Maurice that you suggested something before we started talking that could be very true, that this could be a way to really get subscriber interest, to really develop an involvement with the community, which, ultimately, will rebound to the cable system's advantage. I'm not sure that they're looking down the road sufficiently so that they can see what access could bring them. Maybe that's understandable, in light of all the other problems that have pervaded the industry at this time.

Let's face it. We're dealing with pioneers here. They're getting this thing started. But I do think that the Commission must continue to provide the spark and stimulation so that access doesn't just fall by the wayside as a good idea that didn't make it—which I think would be a real shame.

**MJ:** Are there any other specific things that you think the Commission could do, since you've taken a positive stand on access, to bring it to the attention of the cable operators, to get them more motivated over the next few years?

**Wiley:** Well I think we certainly provided the impetus for the channels. We try to suggest that in a situation where the [access] situation wasn't totally reasonable, that we'd find ways to accommodate their particular systems' needs, and I think we've tried to suggest a showing of concepts and ideas through meetings we've had at the Commission. Let me ask you. What do you think the Commission could do?

**MJ:** Sure. One of the things that struck me while I listened to your positive response to access—which I didn't think would be quite that positive—was that in specific addresses, if you could stress the importance of community programming and specifically the access concepts. Also, I think the most important thing that we have to develop in order to make access work is an economic base. And I feel, that although that there are a number of demands for a certain percentage of the fees that are paid to local communities [by the cable operators], that if the FCC could favorably support that concept to be negotiated on a community-by-community level...

**Wiley:** I think the other side of the coin, of course, to reiterate, is that we have an industry beset with many economic problems...the high interest rates, continued opposition of more established industry, the complexity of the rules, all the diverse problems of getting started this industry... There has thus been some natural reluctance to spend time on anything from which they don't see direct revenue flowing... What we've been afraid of is that everybody will take a little bit from cable. You can find a good justification for a lot of the services that some of the cities and states are providing... They should have some money. You can see justification for people who come in and say, look, we want to have unique and innovative access programming, but we need money. And a little here, little there... unfortunately,

we're not dealing with an industry that has that kind of margin.

**MJ:** Let's just take this analogy: In Los Angeles Theta cable passes 225,000 homes... Their saturation is about 30%, about 60,000 homes. If just one percent of that group subscribes to the cable because of the public access programming—which is not an unreasonable figure—that would bring additional revenue to the cable system of some \$140,000. Now, a certain percent of that to go back into the production of public access programs seems to be kind of thing that could make it work. It's the impetus which is needed to make access work.

**Wiley:** Maury, let me ask you this. How do you see public access? Do you see something on which the desire to appear, the whole stimulation for programming should come



from the individual, or should we have something which is pre-packaged, pre-programmed? Should it be the kind of situation where people react to their own individual needs, which is what I had originally thought of access?

**S.R.:** I'm not sure that's the distinction we should make... It seems to me that if television is the dominant medium in our society, that in a democratic society it's necessary that people be able to carry on a dialogue.

**Wiley:** But a dialogue means that somebody's gotta want to watch, and that's one of the problems. There's plenty of people who want to express, I suppose, at least some people. But I don't think we can necessarily assume, nor require there to be people who want to listen to it. I think that's one of the problems that you have.

**S.R.:** But you need the resources to learn how to do it right, to have some access to the tools. And since we're talking about a system that may well be the communications system of our society, and that for the non-profitable uses, which, because of their nature, should be subsidized by some of the more profitable ones, in the same ways as, say, a non-profit organization gets a bulk mailing permit, which the government is, in effect, subsidizing.

**Wiley:** I think when the Commission first thought about it, I think they had this idealized, stylized view that somebody would be walking along the street and would get the urge to express themselves, go into a studio, and divest themselves of some strongly felt views. To what extent is that even a viable concept in access? Does that have any relevance to what's happening?

**N.D.:** That runs out of its appeal really soon.

**Wiley:** What do you see the major use that revenue would be put to [for access]?

**MJ:** We'd like to see small grants made to individual groups to do their programming.

**Wiley:** Grants? That sounds like foundation or governmental.

**MJ:** Well, you need some sort of structure, you just can't give a chunk of money. Some type of structures have to be developed in order to facilitate dissemination of funds, and we see community advisory boards possibly, made up of a cross-section of people in the various franchising districts to be allocated certain sums of money, either from the city, or the government, or whatever the funding base happens to be. [These boards] would then give smaller grants to people who want to make programs...

**N.D.:** There are several basic components to production. It may be elementary, but it requires equipment, repair, because it breaks down under great use; it requires some staffing—maybe not even a lot, but somebody who's there who knows the situation; and it requires the basic support facilities for any office—rent, xeroxing, telephone, advertising, whatever is necessary. That is basically what

all of us are constantly struggling to get.

**S.R.:** ...We're looking at it from a different situation. Rochester is a pre-cable community, and our public access comes through broadcasting, on the PBS station. There are a lot of exciting possibilities there. ...When we started, we said, here's the equipment, go use it. We found that didn't really work out so well. Two other elements were very necessary. One was training. Out of that has come a training program where people can learn to produce programming...

**N.D.:** It's interesting to note that all three of our groups have found themselves getting into the training aspects simultaneously.

**S.R.:** The second element is *models*. We found that people aren't used to thinking of themselves as television producers, and so one of the important roles that we've played is to use the equipment, demonstrating how you can produce a program that will have some



impact; that of course connects to all of our other work, since people learn how to use the equipment by working with us on programs, then go on to make a program...

**Wiley:** We've been struggling for a while in broadcasting with the whole concept of the Fairness Doctrine, balance, contrasting views, etc. How do you handle that in access? Do you just let it all hang out, and see what happens?

**S.R.:** In access, that's no problem, because anyone can come on. I'd like to mention what's going on in Rochester, because it's very exciting in terms of broadcast. There's a television series called "Catch 21" on which any community group can come on at a first-come, first-served basis and have a half-hour of air time. The Fairness Doctrine is met by the fact that if one group says one thing, you can find another group to take an opposing point of view... By putting public access on broadcast television, a lot of chicken-and-egg problems we see in public access about resources and viewers, etc., have been by-passed.

**N.D.:** I'd like to change the subject and ask you a few questions... There are a couple of things coming up before the Commission that relate directly to this whole question, I think, of how you get access funded, started, going, exciting, so forth. One of them have to do with the rules for local origination requirements for cable systems with more than 3,500 subscribers. Obviously there is a relationship between whether or not a local channel has the equipment to provide origination programming, and whether or not they would be willing to turn it over to access... Some access projects today are origination experiments, they're not even required as access. What is your feeling on this whole question?

**Wiley:** You know, I have ambivalent feelings about whether we should have mandatory or optional origination. I can see that the idea of requiring the equipment to be there would be helpful in the access aspect. This is one of the reasons why we've opened it up to take a look at it. We've never really gone very far. We won the case before the Supreme Court on our mandatory requirements... Yet the Commission has never felt compelled to enforce those rules. We've suspended them, in effect.

**N.D.:** Has anybody made the suggestion that the 3,500 subscriber system be required to originate, but that it could be waived in the case where there's a public access project to use the equivalent funds to do a similar kind of thing?

**Wiley:** I've never heard that suggestion, but that's one possibility. I would have to say this: that I'm generally dissatisfied with the whole concept of having rules, then waiving certain parts of the measure, because the Commission gets enmeshed, then, in whole host of individual interpretations. It's much better to tailor your rules as close to what you ultimately want.

**MJ:** What kind of specific inputs besides just sending briefs would be helpful to the Commission in determining the future of access?

**Wiley:** Well, just come on by and do an interview, just do a private interview without the cameras and mikes, with the Commissioners. Bring your story to bear. I realize that you haven't got funds or time or inclination, maybe, to travel to Washington... I think you'll find that we're just people there, people who don't have all the answers. We're looking for expertise, input, and so I think that you have obviously studied this, feel strongly about it. You ought to express it.

**N.D.:** Another area of policy coming up, the report of the State/Federal/Local Advisory Panel...

**Wiley:** We just came out with a report on part of their recommendations. You should read that. But that's only part. The rest of



Photos: Roland Freeman

their recommendation deals with the very controversial question of two-tiered or three-tiered regulation, what have you. Sometime late this summer we hope to have that issue up from the staff and up to the Commission for consideration.

**N.D.:** I was investigating the part of the report relating to the Open Channel petition, and I was led to understand that was included...

**Wiley:** That is not included in the final petition, although there are some comments relative to the issues we have been discussing today. But the specific petition by Miss Sklover will be separately decided.

**N.D.:** Then it will be discussed by the Commission?

**Wiley:** Oh, yes. It will be. I can say no more, since it is pending before the Commission.

**S.R.:** We have about one minute left.

**Wiley:** Well, let me say this. I've found this very interesting. I'm glad you asked me to come on this show [laughter]. I hope it has been interesting for you. I think this kind of dialogue is good, because, let's face it, people there at the Commission do have a lot to do. They have a tremendous number of complex problems to try to resolve. You need, just like everybody else, to tell your story.

**N.D.:** Can I ask you two questions relating to telling our story?

**Wiley:** You've got 30 seconds.

**N.D.:** Number one, would it be possible to videotape the regular Commission meeting on Wednesday?

**Wiley:** Ah... probably not. Because those meetings are not open to the public at this point, because we do discuss a lot of sensitive areas. It probably would not be possible at this stage, although we are moving more and more to openness. And we do have open meetings, for example, with various groups. We have had meetings with black groups, and women's groups, industry groups. So there would be a possibility with something there. But the meetings where we discuss the agenda items, at this point, probably not.

**N.D.:** If we wanted to do so, what would be our procedure?

**Wiley:** Talk to the Executive Director, Mr. Torbet.

**N.D.:** Number two, if we wanted to testify and were out of town, could we send you a videotape for testimony, if we had the equipment made available?

**Wiley:** Testify where?

**N.D.:** Before the Commission on one of these issues we've discussed.

**Wiley:** Send a videotape? Well, I think you'd do better to come around in person.

**N.D.:** If you're in Rochester or Milwaukee, or...

**Wiley:** Well, I think you have to find ways to communicate. That's what we're talking about, the FCC. So maybe you're finding a new way to communicate. We'd have to look at it.



# Theory and practice of community video, II: access groups tell their stories

The last issue of Community Video Report featured some of the conclusions we have reached here at WCVC regarding the theory and practice of "community video."

This issue we are continuing to explore the many issues and problems in general, area by talking with representatives of several community-based video projects around the country. These interviews were conducted during the hectic days of the NCTA annual convention last April in Chicago. In addition, we are printing excerpts from a transcript of a rather lively panel on public access and related subjects held at the NCTA Convention. Finally, we are printing interviews with FCC Chairman Richard Wiley and communications consultant and businessman Theodore Ledbetter.

The following are excerpts from a workshop on Public Access programming held the final day of the NCTA Convention in April. Panel members, in speaking order are: Maurice Jacobsen, Los Angeles Public Access Project; Marsha Dolby, Bakersfield, California, Video Access Center; Jim Thomas, Rockford Cablevision, Rockford, Ill.; and David Othmer, author of The Wired Island. There was a lively exchange from the audience, including a few cable programmers and those workers in video and public access.

Jacobsen started off his presentation with a short tape called "Public What?..." showing responses by L.A. residents to the question, what is public access? Out of some 80 responses, only two really knew for sure what public access is. The rest responded with a variety of interesting, often hilarious descriptions.)

**Jacobsen:** The point of the tape, obviously, is that folks really don't have any idea what public access is, and all the people in the tape we talked to live in cabled areas... So what does that mean?... The two people on the staff of the cable system in L.A. in charge of public access weren't allowed to come to the convention, presumably because the management felt that there was nothing to learn here... The main thing I would like to say is that the cable operators who are here today is that public access could be an incredible tool for building interest in the cable system and as a direct correlation to that, building a subscriber base in the community. In Los Angeles, for example, the cable system passes 225,000 homes... and the saturation rate is about thirty-five percent. If just one percent

## Memphis: women get cable channel

By Victoria Costello

Cable programming for and by women will begin in Memphis, Tenn. when the first women's channel begins its operations there this fall. At the recent NCTA convention, Ms. Ann Rickey, president of the Memphis Women's Channel Inc., related to me some of the group's history and its current status there. We spoke about funding, and about the exciting potential of other women's channels organizing around the country. It is towards this goal of a future network of women's channels in CATV systems that the Memphis women direct those inquiring about their project, and it is in this same hope that I'll pass along some of the information I picked up in our conversation.

Women in Cable of Memphis, Inc., raised its own seed money with the sale of stock to members of the community, including many of their own groups and other local women. They also carried on a massive publicity and organizing campaign, an effort of a coalition of 18,000 Memphis women. The Women's Channel represents a vast spectrum of women's groups within the community ranging from the AAUW, the Women's Political Caucus, to the DAR and Church Women United.

In the earliest days of the franchise hearings before the City Council, this highly organized group of Memphis women approached all of the CATV bidders and got each of them to agree to the idea of a women's channel. Apparently the present cable owner hasn't actually given much support to the project but the firm coalition of Memphis women have gathered their own audience, demand, and potential advertising revenues and thereby have virtually assured their own existence.

Because of its success at becoming the first women's channel, the Memphis Women's Channel Inc. is evolving into a clearinghouse for information and resources for women with [See MEMPHIS, p. 13]

of those 225,000 homes hook up to the cable because of public access... and would not otherwise subscribe to public access, then the theta system would bring in over \$140,000 a year. That's a substantial amount of money, just as a direct result of public access besides all ancillary publicity and public interest, that can be generated by public access programming. It has been a message that we have been bringing to the convention for 2½-3 years, that public access is an incredible tool, if you market, publicize, and support it, but we have always been put in backseat positions that here is something that these crazy media-freaks went down to Washington and lobbied for and now got it and now we gotta live with it. Without really understanding it, or what's really worse, taking the effort to try to understand... and what the potential of public access is. A lot of the groups have an amazing amount of energy, idealism and drive to make it work. It was interesting to note that at the convention this year, that independent of any discussions we had between ourselves, a lot of major independent access groups are now turning to PBS for support and interest and to our surprise finding incredible openness, incredible support in our efforts to utilize public broadcasting UHF, VHF, channels for public access-type programming.

I think that the cable industry is really going to blow a good thing with us. I really think that you are not going to take advantage of the potential in this room, and by not doing that, I think public access is a sucker, possibly the industry might suffer.

**Dolby:** I represent the Community Video Access Center in Bakersfield, California, which is approximately 100 miles north of Maurice here. We have developed over a year and a half, a sort of different attitude from the people in Los Angeles, and from many of the people around the country. Maybe it's because Bakersfield is sort of a conservative town. We have about 200,000 people in greater Bakersfield. Really isolated by deserts and mountains. There just aren't a lot of what cable people call videofreaks in our town. So keep that in mind as I give this talk, which is going to be sort of different from some of the things that video people have come to know.

Our public access is on a Warner system. It was one of the AMC [Alternate Media Center, New York University] projects begun in 1972, and we were supported for a year by Warner, as was DeKalb. How many heard DeKalb's presentation this morning? We're in the same position that they are. Warner supported us for a year, and then in December decided to give us only equipment and no money. Anyway, the philosophy we have developed in Bakersfield is that public access is an opportunity for the community, rather than a right.

Maybe this is because this was offered to us by the cable company, not by a group of people who went out and lobbied... But what has happened is—and we're very proud of this—that all kinds of people in Bakersfield are using public access, from Establishment groups... I'm public information director for the Library and we have used cable and video very, very heavily. Many county departments have used it. Clubs have used it. People from the college and high schools, elementary schools. We have reached a broad cross-section of the community in using access. They are using it with the idea that we are developing a community resource center, a community information system, where anybody in the community can go and make a tape. In some communities, I think that people who feel videofreaks are the ones who use access are afraid to come in or feel it's not for them. I don't know; we don't have the freaks, so they all come in.

We don't try to compete with commercial television. In fact, we have a good relationship with them. We can get all the news on commercial television we want. The only reason I'm here today is that one of the commercial



VIDEO PEOPLE FROM throughout the U.S. and Canada set up two rooms to screen tapes and hold discussions at the NCTA Convention in late April in Chicago. Above, folks are watching tapes in one of the "Video Environments."

station managers donated the money to send me...

Another way we differ from many access groups around the country I know is that we don't go into production, especially those who emphasize creative kind of video. We try to make everything as easy as possible, because we know we have housewives, elementary school kids, and senior citizens all coming in. A lot of them won't come in if we're going to require them to come to all sorts of production workshops.

In terms of our set-up, it's really very simple. It's not nearly as elaborate as say DeKalb's. We have 5 black-and-white portapaks, two 3650 editing decks, accessories, etc. We have access to the cable, but we don't have our own channel. We are allocated a certain time slot on the Warner system. We make our tapes, take them down, and they put them on. We can't do our own cablecasting. We can't go on, but we do have the access, and that's what's important. During the first 1½ years, we trained about 900 people, plus representatives of many groups in town. We cablecast about 600 hours of programming. Some of the projects we have

been working on... through the local college, which operates a program for senior citizens, is to give a class in video to them. In return for our doing this, Bakersfield College has given us a building for facilities for rent-free. The Kern County Library where I work has applied for some federal money to operate a project to carry library services to shut-ins and people who can't get out of their homes using video. We'll be working through the Video Access Center to do this...

I want to talk for a minute on funding. From what I've heard, this has been the major topic of discussion so far. As I said, the Access Center in Bakersfield was completely supported for Warner cable for a year. And we have now been extended until the end of June. Since that time, we have done a lot of the things that everybody else has been doing... writing proposals, going to city government, all the businesses in town, anyone who has money, giving presentations, everything we can think of to get money. Last week we were asked to give a presentation to the California Joint Committee on Telecommunications... They, I think, are developing the attitude that [See NCTA, p. 12]

**Interview with Maurice Jacobsen, LOS ANGELES PUBLIC ACCESS PROJECT, 1802 Berkeley St., Santa Monica, Calif. 90404 (213) 828-8900.**

**Nick:** Number one, what are some of the similarities of problems in community video around the country?

**Jake:** It's kind of progressed. Three years ago we all had a common problem of trying to figure out how we were going to get access to cable and access to the media. Our whole philosophy was basically alien to broadcasters and cable people. I think we've gotten beyond that now. I think the whole concept of public access has gained a lot of credibility in the last three years. The next level for video groups was how to get equipment. I think a lot of groups have solved that through initial foundation support and/or institutional support. So, now we're beyond the philosophical goal of access, beyond the simple fact of getting the equipment to produce the programming. Now there are two critical areas: one is how to best use the medium to its potential to create programs that people will watch in a meaningful fashion—there becomes a real interrelation between the community and the producers of programming; and there's the problem of developing an economic base to let that happen on a long-term basis. Those are shared needs, shared problems between groups.

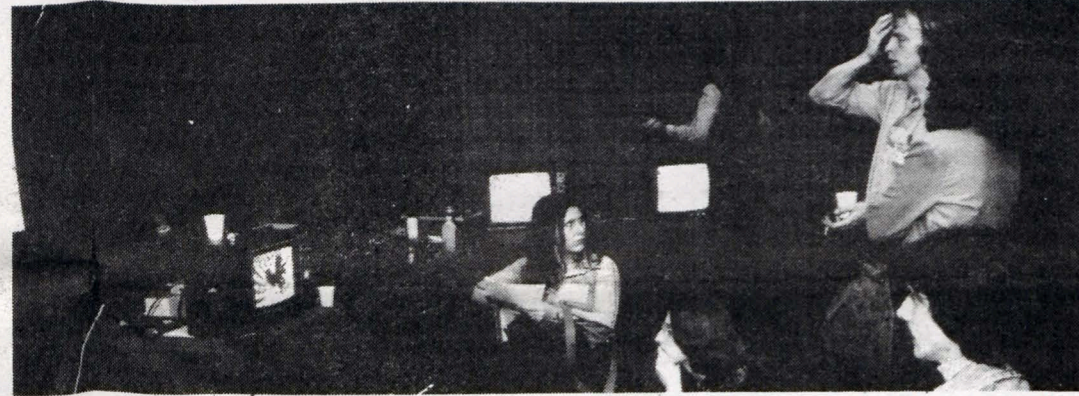
**Nick:** Is there a major distinction between groups that have cable in their cities and groups that don't?

**Jake:** No. I only see cable as one channel of access. I think broadcasting is important, obviously. The whole concept of closed-circuit systems—where a tape is made for specific audiences—is really critical. So cable is just one method of distribution that can be considered by a community video group. If there's not cable in a community, and with the current degree of sophistication in the cable industry and the marginal degree of support from the industry... we find that many of the more important groups are ones that are independent of the cable.

It is the whole question of utilizing media to organize people and raise their consciousness about issues of life.

**Nick:** But those groups which came into being around the cable system—which wouldn't have existed but for some cable operator giving them money—they are more inhibited in their philosophical outlook. They don't agree with what you just said.

**Jake:** I really feel, especially after being here at the convention and meeting all sorts of people, that public access really reflects an awful lot about the person or persons running the access center or the access channel. If the people in a community have a strong political sense, then their programs are going to be much more relevant than if someone running the access center sees himself really as a facilitator, without understanding totally the reality of being part of the cable industry itself. A lot of the groups tied directly to the cable operator are incredibly naive in their whole approach towards media, how they are



MAURICE JACOBSEN and other public access advocates interview FCC Chairman Richard Wiley in the hall outside the "Video Environment" at the NCTA Convention in Chicago (Interview starts, p. 1)

## Milwaukee: three pre-cable video projects going strong

**Interview with Michele Goldstein and John Pawasarat, INPUT, Community Video Center, 1015 W. Mitchell, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53204. [414] 645-8116.**

**Nick:** Could you describe INPUT?

**John:** INPUT started in April 1972 out of an alternative high school, the Independent Learning Center in the south side of Milwaukee, a Latin and poor white community. How it started was that we were working with media, trying to find ways to help community groups better articulate what the issues were—slide shows, 16mm, 8mm, and we got turned on to this videotape thing. We got a loan—\$3,000 from friends—and bought some equipment on the promise that we would get funded within a year to pay them back... so we began, teaching ourselves. And the thing was so successful that about 6 months later we moved out of the school and incorporated, starting to try to get grant money to survive. The basic issues we were concerned with were offering training and resources to community groups, and to do some research on cable television in Milwaukee, which was becoming pretty imminent. Nobody knew anything about it... so we've been doing this for two years.

**Michele:** I think it's important to say that the INPUT thing was primarily focused on the South Side. We weren't going to go all over the city to all sorts of community groups and doing a million different things that really didn't affect any kind of an area and where you couldn't see the results of what you were doing.

**Nick:** Are there other community video projects in other Milwaukee neighborhoods?

**John:** INPUT was the first one, and then about a year ago, some West Side people,

mostly from an organization called West Side Action Coalition, an Alinsky-type organizing group. We knew a lot of those people and they started using our equipment. So we said, OK, it's a very valuable tool, and there wasn't nearly so much tight, professional-type organizing going on in the South side, so we all talked and let them use our equipment for about six months on the premise that they would get started and begin their own thing, which was very successful.

**Michele:** West Side working with the Coalition has, I think, put together some very effective video on very specific issues: the kind of work they do is very action-oriented. They will make a tape documenting the issue, but then they use the tape to follow the actions, to use in kind of an evaluation thing; one, just for themselves—to see how things went, what they could do next time to change things; but also, then for people who couldn't participate: they have tons of showings in the community of what happened at the action, what's the next step. It's a way to involve more people than just the bodies that participate in an action.

The other thing that has happened in Milwaukee is that John and other people at INPUT wanted to make the kinds of things they were doing there available on a citywide basis. That's how the Community Video Exchange Project began. They talked with people from Channel 10, the Public Broadcasting Station in Milwaukee, to try and co-operate in developing this kind of thing city-wide. They did a survey of community agencies that service people to see what kind of need there would be, and what kind of interest in video resources. On the basis of that the project was formed. Then the Public Library agreed to house the thing at the Central branch, and it got off the ground.

**Nick:** Where does the money come from?

**John:** The money comes from the Cudahay Fund, a local foundation in Milwaukee, with secondary grants from the Milwaukee Foundation and the Johnson Foundation—Johnson's Wax, in Racine. I think the significant thing was that Channel 10 saw this as an opportunity to extend a lot of their programming into the community.

**Michele:** The Library, you know, is faced with the real problem of people not coming into the Library anymore. It's obvious they are going to have to do other things to get people involved in their resources... One effect we hope we're having is that the playback part of our work can become taken over by the library institution itself, and that would free us to work on training and other things. Many libraries, in fact are actually getting into buying equipment and doing production themselves, going out and trying to get the community involved. That, I think, is really exciting. You know, libraries are pretty neutral things in most communities, and that gives them the potential to provide a great many resources in a way that people will use them.

**Nick:** Do you relate to other institutions in the city as a formal thing?

**John:** We offer basic video training to just about anyone... just a simple hour-long workshop on how the equipment works, etc. Our policy is that any institution... government, universities, public schools... people with bucks... We're not going to be a free service to groups with tax-based budgets. We offer free services to community groups in Milwaukee. Individuals cannot just come in by themselves, even. They can't just come in and make an artsy-craftsy tape. They have to be working with a community group on some issue to gain access to the PortaPaks.

**Nick:** One last thing: what point is the cable TV franchising process in Milwaukee?

**John:** They're going to give a franchise out, maybe next fall.

**Michele:** A year ago one of the aldermen had appointed a citizens advisory committee to study a cable ordinance that they city attorney had drawn up. Four years before that the city council had granted a franchise, which was vetoed by the mayor. Then the issue was dead for a while. Then there was a moratorium on cable statewide, and a state commission. Then last year our city council got back into it by drawing up this ordinance.

John and I serve on this so-called citizens advisory committee, which isn't really too much. We were supposed to be evaluating this ordinance. What has happened is that a city utilization committee within the government has become real active. Government is moving in on the issue from their point of view, what they like to see happen.

**Nick:** What sort of community organizing have you been doing around cable?

**John:** We do a lot of things all the time. A lot of time, it kind of gets to be a pain in the ass. Groups just have us come in to talk about cable tv because it's a nice thing to talk about at a meeting. But I think as groups begin using the video equipment, they begin to realize the dimensions of the technology and what cable TV might mean. That's usually how groups get interested in cable in the first place.

**Michele:** We're not going around pushing cable. We talk about the fact that cable is becoming a reality, that it is an issue that is relevant to them, to become involved in. Cable seems to be a constant part of our work, though, because it is an issue that isn't going away. But there's not a high level of awareness in Milwaukee, I'd say...

and being used by the cable system. And when the plug is pulled—the plug being the financial support of the cable system—they don't know where to go, where to turn. They're not prepared for it because they've been handed things.

Access is something that anyone could run—a pet orangutang could run an access center.

**Nick:** That's true, once you've got the concept together—who you're serving, what you're doing, how you're able to go about it. The biggest problem, though, isn't defining your audience in the first place, isn't it?

**Jake:** I don't know whether some of the access groups are fully cognizant of that, it's something you have to learn over time. The first impulse is—wow, let's just go out and let people relate to it, not really thinking about the whole process of what getting it on the cable means... Two or three years ago, people used to come to us and say, we've gotta tape this conference, there's just great material that people have got to save... This sort of thing still happens, but we sit down with them, before we even talk about taping and say, "Look, these are the questions you've gotta answer for us: how is your tape going to be distributed, how's it going to be edited? How are you going to handle the finances? How are you going to show it, so that you don't have to depend on us for a playback deck everytime you want to see the tape." Two-thirds of those people, once they understand the realities of the situation, will decide that maybe taping is not the best thing

for them to do, it might be more energy or expense than they want to utilize.

We have been educating members of existing community groups as to how they can best utilize the media to get their message across.

As far as cable is concerned, I see the concept of leased-channel access being ultimately more important than the public access stations.

**Nick:** Could you explain the difference?

**Jake:** Public access channel—and rightly so—that is scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. A leased channel is one where a group of people can get together to schedule their programming in some sort of meaningful fashion, whether it be news, education, whatever. But that station or channel will have some direction to it. Some of the things that will obviously happen to the public access channel are: groups who have money, who are established, will be able to produce better programming for public access. And they're going to be the groups who already have access now—the symphonies, community drama centers—they're going to be able to get money to produce for public access, and it's going to be a perfectly socially acceptable vehicle for this to happen. And the sophistication in programming in public access will probably become very, very high over the years. But it won't mean very much, because it's all going to be watered down together, homogenized. And I think that's a reality we're going to have to face.

[See LOS ANGELES, p. 13]

## Minneapolis: student-based video work

**Interview with Ron McCoy, University-Community Video Access Center, Studio A, Riarig Center, U. Minnesota, Minneapolis. (612) 373-9838.**

**McCoy:** What we're doing in Minneapolis is the University-Community Video Access Center, which is a room, a space at the University of Minnesota, which we use as a workroom. We don't do any in-house studio productions. It is sponsored through student fees at the University of Minnesota, through the Minnesota Unions, the student union, which provides 60% of the budget, \$25-30,000 to run a video access center—access to portapaks.

The other group up there is the Telecommunications Corporation, which was

formed by the student government. Student government at Minnesota isn't very strong, they realized that and formed three non-profit organizations before they folded. They just folded three weeks ago. There was a referendum on campus and the students voted down the student government. There are 40,000 students at U/Min; it's a commuter campus. 80% drive in. Some dorms. The campus has its own cable system, much like Syracuse. It has good educational programming on this cable system. We've been subsidized by student fees for two years. We were independent last year. We have a combined operating budget of \$50,000—3½ paid staff. One person is picked up by the New Careers Program. We have work-study students and interns who work there. Our big effort this year has been programming on the cable system—15 minutes at the top of every hour. We have a captive audience in the classrooms.

We also try to do public access. We're in the same boat as D.C.—no cable. We've been trying to do access for two years, but there's no cable. Cable's been studied to death in Minnesota. It's under state regulation now. The State Commission has to write rules and regulations concerning cable, the technical part of it as well as the access. Most of the cable in the state is rural. TelePrompTer is in Duluth, Rochester... What we've been trying to do is profit-making gigs. We now have a corporation which has profit-making components to route the money into worthwhile activities like public access. We have a 70-30 breakdown for gigs we do. The equipment's available, but most of the money goes into the Center.

In the middle of this are 5-7 people who have been doing this for the last four years now. West Bank Union Community Video Access, which started in 1972, and the Telecommunications Corporation, also started in

1972, together form the University-Community Video Access Center...

Since there's no cable, our efforts at a video theatre failed. Our visibility on campus is very low. We're on the 5th floor of an academic building. The only video storefront in town folded. We can't really leave the University, because we're funded from student fees.

So we're working on the pilot for a PBS access. The pilot, called *Communi-Tube*, ran in January. It was a half-hour, 2" color production, a 2" color intro with a sampler of half-inch tapes run off a scan-converter to 2" tapes... We're now into negotiations for a regular weekly half-hour or bi-weekly hour on the local educational station, which is a PBS affiliate.

Unfortunately, the management of Channel 2... feels that they are doing public access now. They have one program on prime-time Wednesday nights on their UHF affiliate, which is in the same building, called "People and Causes." People pay \$20/hour to come on, using their studio with 16mm film or slides. We've used that a number of times, with half-inch tapes shot off a monitor... But nobody can get the UHF channel anyway. The only way we got the show in January was through the University. People at the station didn't know it was half-inch tape until the day before...

We've had more response to the *Communi-Tube* since it was aired by our playing it closed-circuit. We did it at a museum show, some 61,000 people went to that. So we actually got more showing at that and trucking it around than on broadcast.

**Nick:** Why did the storefront fold?

**Ron:** The storefront had no funding base. It was run through the College of Art and Design, Minneapolis. Some students borrowed the equipment from the College. They screwed it up somehow, and got that taken away. The University Video Center hadn't started then, so the only place in town to get equipment was at the Model Cities Communications Center, which ran for 2½ years, and is now phased out. There was a group prior to that a few years ago that tried to set up the original Community Video Center in Minneapolis. These were the same core of people that are now working at the University Center. Different organizations, same people working together, trying to make public access work.

So this is the last bastion of public access in Minneapolis, the Video Center at the University. If we don't get through the funding hassles we're having now, we'll probably fold up and go underground.



## Radical critics

*Politics of News Media Control* by Howard J. Ehrlich (Research Group One Report No. 15: 2743 Maryland Avenue, Baltimore, Md. 21218. 50 cents)

*Control of Information and Directory of the Networks* by The Network Project (*Notebooks* Nos. Two and Three, available from 104 Earl Hall, Columbia University, New York, N.Y. 10027) \$2/each (\$5/institutions) or \$10-\$25 for annual subscription.

**FEEDBACK.** A series of five radio programs. (Available on tape: Radio Free People, 133 Mercer St., N.Y., N.Y. 10012; in transcript, *Performance Magazine*, July and September, 1972: 249 W. 13th St., N.Y. 10011)

"Sixteen notes on television and the movement" by Todd Gitlin, in *TriQuarterly* issue *Literature and Revolution*, p. 335-366. Reprints available from Kraus, Rte. 100, Millwood, N.Y. 10546, \$2.50, or from TQ, University Hall 101, Northwestern U., Evanston, Ill. 60201.

Starting with the premise that the U.S. mass media "operate to continually underscore the legitimacy of business and govern-

ment, to enhance their perpetuation in the name of order and stability, and to romanticize their agents with publicity and sometimes affectionate attention," *Politics of News Media Control* attempts to dispel the myth that deep conflict exists between the media and the government-business complex. The pamphlet describes the corporate structure of the media and illustrates the impact of that control with two case studies—media coverage of the Children's March for Survival in March, 1972, and the treatment of blacks in Iowa media. There are also sections on racism, sexism, and the public broadcasting system.

Ehrlich's pamphlet, stemming from radio scripts by Great Atlantic Radio Conspiracy for which he works, is one of an increasing number of socialist-oriented analyses of the mass media, in the style of the power structure research exemplified by NACLA and other research organizations. Unfortunately, this pamphlet is too sketchy and makes too many sweeping generalizations to sway any but the already committed, a common problem with much left-oriented research in the U.S.

A much better job is done by the Network Project, whose *Notebook* series covers various aspects of media control. (See p. 5, *CVR* #3 for review). Two of these pamphlets were issued in connection with an excellent and award-winning series of radio programs about

the media which were produced in cooperation with WBAI-FM in New York and have been widely distributed. The radio programs, which are lively, imaginative, funny, and extraordinarily informative, are available at reasonable rates for broadcast, and transcripts were published by *Performance*.

*Control of Information and Directory of the Networks* are factual, dense presentations of material using the same premise Ehrlich starts with—concentrated corporate control of the media, the basic consensus of values between the power elites in the society, and the impact of that control on non-elites (read: Americans). The *Notebooks*, however, focus on the television media alone, and do an excellent, non-rhetorical job of analyzing many of the pat assumptions about "free TV" in a commercialized society. They expose exactly how the ownership and the reliance on advertising lead inevitably to censorship and the manufacture of ideology that serves these needs. It is a subtle and substantial argument.

SDS founder and movement theorist Todd Gitlin has contributed a personal and well-written essay on the impact of television from the perspective of a participant in the 1960s radical politics. His "16 notes" are divided into three sections, first describing the "power and mission of commercial television"—which, he points out, is as far as most critics go; second, he looks at the media's "capacity to produce and nurture effects opposite to the

ones it intends," or the dialectical nature of communications, in other words; finally, he hints at some suggestions for a more liberated media, concluding that "politically, open communications could constitute an obstacle to the pyramiding of power that characterizes all previous civilizations, since power requires, among other things, a monopoly of information at the top."

The Gitlin piece is clearly the most readable and lucid synthesis of "power-structure research" and theory I have read on the subject of media. While this kind of analysis is not everyday reading for most people, theory is essential. So, step one for us is to try and reach each other with our ideas.

Perhaps the only American that publishes this kind of material in book form that is commercially distributed is Herbert Schiller (*Mass Communications and the American Empire* and *The Mind Managers*, see *CVR* #3). Any other discussion of this sort occurs in self-published booklets like those reviewed above, in limited circulation publications. And of course, there are the master's and PhD. theses, which almost nobody ever sees.

We need more and better research into the functioning of the media and case studies that get at the root causes of its control of our minds. Pity that the only way to reach people with this information is through the media under analysis in the first place!

—DeMartino

## Banned in Boston

*Report of the Boston Consumers' Council to the Hon. Kevin H. White, Mayor, on the Development of a Cable Television System* (Nov. 1973: Boston Consumers' Council, City Hall, Boston. 02201)

*Cable in Boston: A Basic Viability Report*, Whitewood Stamps, Inc. (1974: copies from author, 61 Chapel St., Newton, Mass. 02158. \$10) 90 pp.

Boston, like other major metropolitan centers, has been struggling now for several years with the questions involved in whether and how cable television will enter the city. Last November that struggle came to a screeching halt as Mayor Kevin White announced that the city was indefinitely postponing the issuance of CATV franchises. Boston was the first major city to "pull the plug on cable television," said White.

The announcement was the direct outcome of a report to White by the Boston Consumers' Council, a publicly appointed body that had been investigating cable and holding public hearings for the Mayor. The Council listed several possible alternatives: franchising to a single operator to build a city-wide system; franchising several operators to build an interconnected network of separate systems; undertaking a publicly owned system; postponing cable development until unanswered questions regarding CATV's true technological capabilities, regulatory climate, economic viability and ownership alternatives are clarified.

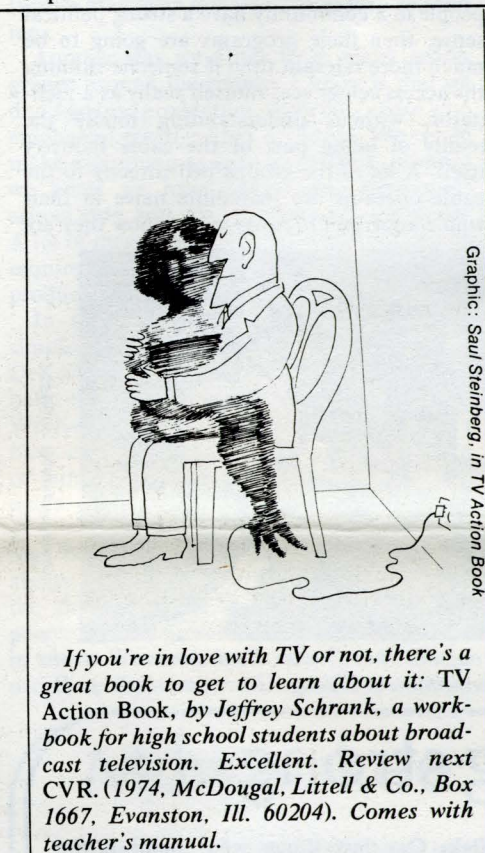
Comparing the history of cable to that of the SST, the Council opted for postponement.

The Council was apparently heavily swayed by a lack of public support for cable, by the failures of cable in New York City, by the difficulty of regulating cable within the legally prescribed franchise fees, the serious questions of whether cable would be economically viable, and questions of privacy. The Council was also interested in further exploring common-carrier type ownership and municipal ownership.

In contrast to the negative Consumers' Council report, which has since sent shock waves throughout the nation's cities, *Cable in Boston* uses a unique method of economic analysis to show that cable could be viable in certain neighborhoods. This incredibly detailed and instructive manual uses Boston as a model by which the components of economic viability are explored, compared, evaluated. Whitewood Stamps, Inc., a group of dedicated cable analysts and activists, have developed a computer simulation model for the economic performance of CATV systems in dense urban markets which compares to none. Furthermore, it is adaptable to local characteristics and situations.

Perhaps the primary contribution of *Cable in Boston* will be, not in the debate within the city itself, but to the analysis of CATV costs nationwide. So many communities (including Boston) are basing decisions on various opinions, all too often those of national bureaucrats and so-called "experts" who never really evaluate the specific local characteristics, cost assumptions, and growth estimates. Certainly not with this kind of detail and comprehensiveness.

Key to Stamps' model is the concept of a threshold "subscriber monthly cost" or SMC. This is defined as "each subscriber's prorated monthly share of the proportional costs incurred in building and operating the cable



If you're in love with TV or not, there's a great book to get to learn about it: *TV Action Book*, by Jeffrey Schrank, a workbook for high school students about broadcast television. Excellent. Review next *CVR*. (1974, McDougal, Littell & Co., Box 1667, Evanston, Ill. 60204). Comes with teacher's manual.

distribution plant over a given period of time." The SMC is always associated with the percentage of subscribers participating in the CATV Service, since the more subscribers, the lower the per-subscriber share. For Boston, Whitewood Stamps indicates an SMC of \$5.30 with 30% subscriber participation. This figure directly contradicts the Consumers' Council report.

—DeMartino

## Endless reports

Last issue (*CVR* #3) we listed endless news letters. Add to them: *The Mobile Newsroom: Video News in the Midwest* (WIDL Video, PO Box 11508, Chicago, Ill. 60611) Monthly at \$4/mo. This is a typed-and-Xeroxed packet with random tidbits about things going on in the Midwest in video field. WIDL Video is apparently a video production group with a mobile van; hence, the name of the newsletter. We saw Vol 2, #4, which was a bit on the amateur side, with a Television Trivia Quiz, a note on what video drop-out is, and a bulletin board of events... The National Technical Information Service, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Springfield, Va. 22151, is the source for the research coming out of the government in the technical fields, among them, of course, telecommunications. Weekly abstracts of this research are available by subscription to newsletter in some 12 areas. *Urban Technology Abstracts* covers communications, as well as administration, planning, housing, sanitation, pollution control, traffic, services, health, economics, etc. Cost: \$35/year. Related titles include *Computers, Con-*

*trol and Information Theory* (\$22.50/yr.); *Library and Information Sciences* (\$20/yr.).

*The Privacy Report* is a new monthly newsletter by the Project on Privacy and Data Collection of the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation, 410 First St., S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003. You can receive it free, although they are requesting tax deductible contributions to aid the work of the project. The May, 1974 issue (No. 10), features an article about the civil liberties challenge presented by cable

## Unions & access

"Community Cable TV: Public Access and Union Fears" by Ralph Lee Smith in *The Nation*, April 6, 1974.

If the prospects of funding and maintaining community video and public access cable projects are difficult now, add to that the problems involved when the organized labor movement decides that anyone operating a PortaPak must be a union-scale, card-carrying member of the AFL-CIO. That is the spectre raised by this thoughtful article by Ralph Smith, who published a similarly prophetic article about cable four years ago ("The Wired Nation"). Smith summarizes a

number of issues of concern to unions and video communicators, much of it coming from a seminar held in February by the AFL-CIO's Labor Studies Center. Two opposite positions emerge: Videomakers (represented by Smith & Red Burns from Alternate Media Center) point out that forced union membership for public access personnel at present would kill it, primarily because nobody is willing to pay for access at this time. In addition, "professionalization" is completely at odds with the video movement's goal of involving lay people in producing their own TV programs.

"My interest is to organize the fellow who runs the camera and get him a week's pay, and not to have volunteer help," says union representative John Carr.

TV. The article is longer on alarming rhetoric than substantive detail, although it does a good job of pointing to potential danger to privacy in two-way cable. Issue also contains report of the National Computer Conference, a migrant student records transfer system, new laws in the state legislatures dealing with privacy issues, recent court action, Congressional report and an article called "Privacy is Not Solitude," dealing with the issue of whether Americans really want privacy.

## Ad hoc it!

*Adhocism: The Case for Improvisation* by Charles Jencks and Nathan Silver (New York: Doubleday Anchor #AO-86. 1973, 216 pp. \$4.95)

If a single word could describe the guiding spirit with which we are building our new, people-oriented media projects, *Adhocism* has got to be it. Coined by architectural critic Charles Jencks in 1968 to describe "a principle of action having speed or economy and purpose or utility," Jencks and co-author Silver have now issued this delightful and provocative book that propounds, illustrates and evangelizes the theory & practice of improvisation, or Adhocism.

The book is profusely illustrated, with pictures and word-gems, vaguely reminiscent of the McLuhan/Fiore concept pieces of a few years ago. Only *Adhocism* is ardently partisan in advocating human scale vs. techno-overkill. It is critical of the status quo, and hopeful of the human spirit. The book, while learned and extremely informational, is neither academic nor pop-cutesy.

The idea of adhocism itself was to me both peculiarly original, and imminently familiar, being as it is the core of a lifestyle and an organizing principle we have used in creating the Video Center. But never had I seen it pointed out as a "theory" before. The shock of recognition for you won't come from my synopsis. Better I should give you an excerpt or two and let you explore adhocism for yourself. I certainly don't agree with all of the book, particularly the section on political subjects. But it's worth your time, I think.

"Basically it (adhocism) involves using an available system or dealing with an existing situation in a new way to solve a problem quickly and efficiently. It is a method of creation relying particularly on resources which are already at hand." (p. 9)

"Today we are immersed in forces and ideas that hinder the fulfillment of human purposes; large corporations standardize and limit our choice; philosophies of behaviorism condition people to deny their potential freedom; "modern architecture" becomes the convention for "good taste."

"The electronic techniques of communication now allow decentralized design and consumption based on individual desire... With an electrified consumer democracy, the time spent and the cost of consumption would plummet, and the impersonal subsystems of large corporation would be repersonalized by combining them *ad hoc* towards specific ends." (p. 55)

"But a new mode of direct action is emerging, the rebirth of a democratic mode and style, where everyone can create his personal environment out of impersonal subsystems, whether they are new or old, modern or antique. By realizing his immediate needs, by combining *ad hoc* parts, the individual creates, sustains and transcends himself.

—DeMartino



## Media: do it!

*Doing The Media*, 1972, The Center for Understanding Media, Inc. 267 W. 25th St., N.Y.C., N.Y. 10001, John M. Culkin, Director. 219 pages.

In the words of John Culkin, director of the Center for Understanding Media (CUM), the collective author of this book, "It has always made good sense for people who live on water to learn how to swim."

*Doing the Media* arrives in the media ocean as a life preserver for many of us floundering around about there, some too tired or unwilling to learn new strokes, others recently pitched in for the first time.

Obviously dedicated mariners, the "wasteland" attitude towards media is absent here. While Culkin's group would object to periodic network oil slicks, their book advances a positive attitude towards media. It exhorts readers to try their hands in doing media in a variety of forms including videotape, film, camera-lens film, still photography, overhead projectors, graphics. The readers are urged to bring what they learn into the classroom to, as Culkin says, "to move media up by moving ourselves down."

Marking the gap between the culture of media and school culture and the resulting dissonance in the experience of our youth, CUM set out to bring media into the schools. The first step was to import media skills to teachers and then to students. They experimented at an elementary school in Mamaro-

neck, N.Y. and from 1½ years of work modeled a curriculum of media studies applicable to any school situation. This book describes that curriculum, which, for its breadth, and imagination, most graduate students' of media would do well to embrace. All teachers should read it for it discusses the uses of media in relation to all subjects, as well as how to teach media.

The guiding principle of CUM in this endeavor was to allow "our" children to be active, intelligent, appreciative and selective consumers of total media culture, just as in the past we have tried to develop taste and appreciation for the traditional arts and humanities. *Doing the Media* will contribute greatly in advancing the principle in our schools.

—Grady Watts

## Cosmic

*Cosmic Mechanix Communications Directory* (INDEX Publications, P.O. Box 699, Port Townsend, Washington 98368. 1973. \$2.95)

This large-format, Whole-Earth-Catalog-sized publication is the first in a projected series dealing with future-oriented technologies. It consists of some 62 pages of reprints from all manner of sources about various communications technologies, including satellites, spacecraft, space photography, videocassettes, cable TV, videotape, computers, video, biofeedback devices, etc. It's a strange melange of materials, from sources as diverse as the *Wall Street Journal* and *Radical Soft-*

ware. For the novice, the book provides an array of information samples. However, if the section on video and cable is any guide, much of the material is several years out of date.

INDEX (which stands for Information Delivery Experiments) plans additional issues of *Cosmic Mechanix* on alternative energy, including solar, methane, wind, hydrogen, geothermal, and tidal. You can order both from the address above.

## Finding bread

*The Bread Game: The Realities of Foundation Fundraising*, by Regional Young Adult Project & Pacific Change. (San Francisco: Glide Publications, 330 Ellis Street. 94102.) 88 pp. \$1.95.

"Well, just how do you get money to do video?" the earnest young videofreak asked in a conclave of video people at the NCTA convention in April. And so we all talked about our experiences with filing for tax exemptions, to forget about Ford and Markle Foundations, how he should concentrate on his local community foundations first. We all had tips and suggestions, made lo these many times. The easiest way for us to have answered his question, however, would have been to hand him a copy of *The Bread Game*. Written for non-establishment, community-oriented groups who are trying to raise funds for the first time, this handy little manual has the most comprehensive and easiest-to-understand instructions that we've ever seen. There are no hot secrets about how to cop a bundle of dough quick, but there are chapters on

classification, how to write a proposal, how to find non-profit sponsors and apply for an IRS tax-exemption, how to set up accurate book-keeping procedures, how to report to a foundation once you have a grant, and some sample proposals.

## Media organizing workshop set in L.A. during August

"What the Media Does to You & What You Can Do to the Media" is the title of a summer workshop on public access to the media in Los Angeles July 29 to August 30. Organized by L.A. Public Access Project and Antioch College/West, the workshop is designed for people interested in gaining the skills of community media organizing. Focus of the course will be: why there should be access to media, how it can be acquired, and what can be done with access.

Resource people have been scheduled from WCVC in D.C., Community Coalition for Media Change, Berkeley, Committee for Open Media, San Francisco, UCLA, USC's Annenberg School of Communication, and National Film Board of Canada's Challenge for Change. Full tuition for three hours college credit from Antioch: \$350, and \$300 for non-credit registration. Full and partial scholarships are available to those demonstrating financial need. Inexpensive accommodations have been arranged. Further information: Cary McMahon, Maurice Jacobsen at LAPA, 1802 Berkeley St., Santa Monica, Ca. 90404 (213) 828-9800; or Charles Bell at Antioch/West, 1067 Fairfax Ave., Los Angeles Ca. 90046. (213) 656-8520.

## Ledbetter: 'I think cable is a great technology'

[LEDBETTER, from p. 6]

**CVR:** What do you think this will do in terms of programming on your station?

**Ledbetter:** Well, that's the kind of thing that's hard to predict. There are so many variables. I know what kind of things are possible today. But a lot of it will depend on the response of the community, and our ability to work with the community and vice versa. We will be just like every other television station—a licensee working in the public interest—and I don't say that lightly, at all.

We will be looking to do certain kinds of things because we know our success will depend on how well we respond to the communities. So what happens really depends on that relationship, on the education of the people that we bring on the staff. But at the same time, it will depend on the ability of the community with respect to what can be done with television.

Right now, I think a lot of people, not just in Washington, are in great awe of television. When they see something they don't like, they accept it and say, there's nothing I can do about that. What they should be doing is calling and writing the station. By the same token, when they see something they do like, they ought to be letting the station know. . . .

**CVR:** With respect with your hopes to develop ties with different communities, do you think that the existence in D.C. of quite a large number of people working in half-inch video will be an advantage? What kind of relationships do you see developing there with your station?

**Ledbetter:** This will be an advantage. There are a lot of people who are familiar with equipment, who have worked with cameras. More importantly, people who have had good reason to think of television programming as form and content, and to turn over in their minds what they would really like to see. Again, I don't like to predict what will happen with anything. . . .

**CVR:** Let's put it this way: at what point in time would you be interested in hearing from people who have program ideas and suggestions?

**Ledbetter:** Oh, I would be interested in hearing from people who have program suggestions anytime. No problem. What we can't deal with now are specific programs. It's just too early. . . .

**CVR:** D.C. has always been pointed to as one of the cities with a significant history of communications activism, because of the major challenges to the broadcast licenses here. You've had some involvement there, and your colleagues have been involved. Did this experience in not succeeding in efforts to deny broadcast licenses have anything to do with what you're doing now?

**Ledbetter:** My main experience in working with license challenge groups was as a technical advisor, with respect to Black Efforts for Soul in Television. To balance that, though, I've been a technical advisor to the Office of Telecommunications Policy. What I was interested in doing with both of these, and everybody who was a client of mine when I was a communications consultant, was to de-mystify the technology. To deal with the technology in plain layman's terms. I figured that I'm no smarter than the average person, and if I could understand how a television station or a cable system works, and I could explain it to somebody else, then they could understand it. . . . There was something very beneficial to me in working with community groups, and that was getting a good feel for and understanding for the kinds of attitudes they had toward television, some of which they weren't aware of.

Prior to that time I used to sit and watch television programs and I would get pissed off at something that happened on TV, I'd have the attitude that well, it's just me. All the ratings and the networks and everybody says that most people like that. So there must be something wrong with me, I was telling myself, since I didn't like it. But working with community groups and clients, I discovered that there are a lot of people who felt the same way about it as I did. It gave me a lot more confidence. I felt that if we were able to get some cable TV stations, some TV stations, that there was an audience out there for it. Prior to that, I wasn't sure there was an audience with interests similar to mine, to my friends, like yours. . . . I think the response to WHUR-FM here in Washington is a perfect example of that.

### Minority cable ownership

**CVR:** Could you comment on where the cable television industry is today, particularly as far as the progress of minority organizations in ownership of cable?

**Ledbetter:** The most beautiful thing—something I never expected to have happen this soon—happened a few weeks ago in Gary, Indiana, when an agreement was reached between Gary Communications Group, which is a local, black-owned cable television system, and its competition, the TelePrompTer (TPT) subsidiary in Gary. The agreement said that Gary Communications Group would buy TPT's physical plant. This started two years ago, when TPT had a franchise and were slow in constructing the system, so a local group of 20 black guys got together, put up some money and went in and got a second citywide franchise.

The TPT administration at that time took a hard line stand to fight these guys. It got down to some very close skirmishes on the poles and in the alleys. At the same time, the companies were relating to each other very competitively. With the changes at TPT, they had to back out of some systems that they couldn't afford to construct. So we come to a very significant point, when a local black group, that on its own financed and built a cable television system in its own community, is able to buy out its competition.

Overall, in the country, there are three major cities that have all or part of the city franchised to black groups—Gary, Seattle, and Atlanta, as of last summer. In the last few months, additional franchises have been granted to black groups in cities like Los Angeles and Compton, Calif., some franchises in upstate Michigan, and smaller towns around the country. You can get an exact update on that from Cable-communications Resource Center, Charles Tate's office.

The most positive things are: 1) these are black groups that are doing, for the most part on their own, without assistance from the multiple system operators. 2) They are local groups, the majority of the groups are local, long-time, life-time residents of those communities. . . . I think it's very positive that they now know they can do it, and are in a position to make the decisions that will affect their community, because that's where they live. . . .

**CVR:** What about the state of the cable industry as a whole? Optimistic, pessimistic?

**Ledbetter:** I'm optimistic. I think cable is a great technology. I think it's been over-regulated, on all levels. . . . The most important determinant in terms of cable service, is the ownership, not the specific regulations. You can't anticipate every situation or it'd be 500 pages long.

The only area I'm pessimistic about cable is the major

urban markets, the top ten cities, including New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington, etc. I'm pessimistic, primarily because: 1) the federal regulations discriminate against the urban markets. . . . 2) In the last year or two black groups have reached a position of strength where a lot of the franchises in these major markets will go to black groups when they are franchised. And I think there are still a lot of people in this country on all levels who are not ready to accept the fact that a black group is able to build and operate and construct and service a cable television system for all people in a particular community. The economic discrimination with respect to the central cities in the top markets, coupled with this attitude, basically an attitude that "niggers can't do it"—those two combined will delay cable development in the major urban markets for some time.

Washington has a third thing going against it. The rules are even more discriminatory because of the closeness of the Washington television market to the Baltimore market. A cable system in Washington could not carry the Baltimore signals as local signals, even though half of the people in Washington can pick them up quite well. . . . so you would have a situation where a cable television salesman in NE Washington would be trying to convince somebody to pay \$6/month for fewer channels than he would get off the air. And that obviously wouldn't work.

### D.C. cable TV problems

**CVR:** Are there other problems you see for cable in Washington? Will Washington ever be cabled?

**Ledbetter:** I think Washington will be cabled. I'm not sure it will happen in the next five years, even if the franchising started by the end of this year, which may be a possibility. . . . We have some local regulations that affect cable in Washington. One is the fire-code zone limits, which means in the downtown areas and along the major arterial streets—which is about one-third of the area of street miles—you cannot have any aerial construction of cable. . . . Since it costs so much to build cable under the ground, costs will be much higher here. Also, a lot of the downtown area has ducting which is, to a certain degree, restricted, which may make costs even higher.

The most important decision to be made in any cable television franchising as far as I'm concerned. . . . is going to cause those of us who live here to really think about it. That is how to franchise multiple districts. Most of us agree that you shouldn't have one franchise going to one group, whether it's local or national. . . . Somehow, we have to split Washington, D.C. into districts. All of the studies show that cable is feasible in an area of medium density, that is 200-300 homes per mile, when you reach into an area with subscriber potential of 20,000 subscribers.

There are parts of Washington with household densities above 1,000 households per mile. So, yeah, cable will work in D.C. But somehow D.C. has to be split into multiple cable districts so that 1) franchises will be granted to corporations which included local residents in each of those areas so that the programming, and other needs could be best determined; 2) and by splitting it up, you lower the capital costs necessary to build each system, thereby bringing it into range of local people. If you franchise the whole system to one company, it will take more than \$30 million to wire Washington. I don't know of any local group that can afford that, outside of *The Washington Post*. . . .



# NCTA panel: those video people sure do talk alot!

[NCTA, from p. 8]

the burden for financial support of access should fall on cable operators. They asked our opinion on this and we gave it. . . .

After all we've been through since December, that public access is still, especially in terms of the FCC, is still experimental and developmental. I think that it is really a shame that the people who believe in access and want to develop it into something have to spend their time getting money instead of doing that developing.

Our experience with Warner was really good. I know in some cases this wasn't true, but we had no problems with Warner. They stayed out of our business, we stayed out of theirs. They paid the bills, and we went about happily making tapes and that was that. We like to feel that we got them subscribers, but there's no way to prove that. We do know that we gave them more public relations during the year than they could buy for the \$25,000 that they put into the Center. Because every time we went out to talk, we'd mention Warner Cable. Every time people came to us to ask about cable, we gave them information. . . . I think this is something to be reckoned with. Public access people have a great deal to give cable systems. Thus, this is what we told the Joint Committee. They will be coming out with some kind of ruling. . . .

I don't know whether public access will survive financially in Bakersfield after June. We have a building, access to the cable, equipment which Warner will continue to maintain. Other than that, we are still scratching around like everyone else. I take back everything I ever said while we were still under Warner's wing about those people who rent their tapes, show their tapes, charge people to learn to use video for money, because now I see. . . it's really scratching. We didn't know how good we had it.

I think my main message is, funding is where it's at right now, as far as we're concerned, not only because we need it.

**Thomas:** When I was called to be on this panel, I asked, Why Me, Why Rockford, Illinois? I had no grandiose stories about public access in the top-100 markets. We, as a system operator, were one of those new systems to energize under the new rules for the top 100 markets in the U.S. set up by the Commission. I'm sure that all of you know a heckuva lot more about what to do with public access than I do. I'm a system operator. We're now in our 10th month of operation in Rockford, Ill., with 8,700 subscribers. One third of our system is built; a year from now the remaining 2/3 of our 500-mile system should be completed. We're not an MSO [multi-system operator]. We're owned by over 100 local shareholders in Rockford.

But where is Rockford Illinois? . . . We happen to be the second largest city in Illinois. . . . We are the 97th market in the U.S., hence it falls under the new rules of the Commission's Third Report and Order. We were franchised by the City Council in Rockford about the time the FCC in 1968—when the Commission froze cable in the top-100 markets. When the new rules came out, we were permitted to build. . . . Thus, when the new rules were issued in February, 1972, we happened to be the first city in the top-100 markets to apply for certification and the FCC supposedly opened up a logjam of certificates based on Rockford, Ill.

Because of this, we knew that there might be some national attention on Rockford, Ill., because we were a precedent case. So, last October 12, we had a little dedication ceremony. . . . We had Chairman Dean Burch, David Foster [President of NCTA], and 400 local dignitaries, to kick off the formal dedication. . . .

Prior to this, we had gone out to community groups. I went out to seek various groups, making speeches about what we knew about access, to categorize various educational authorities. . . . The authorities said, worry about the public access and the educational access channels. Plus, they said you have to publish operating rules, and you don't for the government access channel. We had 90 days from the time we energized the system, to file these rules with the FCC.

Just as you have all said, the authority for the access channel and the portable lightweight equipment adds up to "Do It Yourself Television." . . . This is what they mean, so that's how we wrote our rules. . . .

A number of practical questions about the implementation of public access must be

answered—as an operator. The FCC has six general requirements. . . .

The system must maintain at least one public access channel; the channel must be free; the system must always maintain and have available for public use at least minimum equipment; the system may assess production costs for live studio presentations exceeding five minutes; the system may not exercise any control over program content; and the system must establish operating rules for the channel.

We have other practical questions: What is meant by minimal equipment? Who runs it? Who trains a group or individual to use it? What about leasing or renting equipment? Who determines what's obscene? What material would be objected to? What exactly are the charges, if any? What about promoting public access? What's the system's legal responsibility? What are the franchise terms? Questions like these go beyond those listed in the FCC requirements or the NCTA guidelines. They have to be faced by operators, as the various public groups begin knocking on my door, asking for cable time.

. . . We spent many long days to prepare these rules. . . . We held seminars, the dedication. Live two-way television. But today, 10 months on the air. . . . I have not one request for public access in Rockford, Illinois.

**Othmer:** Let me just identify who I am. I wrote *The Wired Island*, which is a history of the first two years of public access in New York. It's a free publication available from the Fund for the City of New York. . . . It describes what has happened in Manhattan, and makes some recommendations about access. One of those recommendations—and perhaps we should use this as the basis for our discussion today—has to do with funding.

My position is that basically, public access should be a hobby. Public access should be something where people should not be funded to produce for public access. The minute that's done it's going to become like so many other things in this country, it's going to be lost to the public. It's going to become something that belongs to that small group of people who are salaried to produce programming. That was perhaps the most controversial thing I said.

Yes, cable operators should provide equipment that should somehow be made available to people, that nobody should be able to get a salary out of it. Only in that way would it be public, only in that way will people come in and use it.

The other thing is that it should be used by existing groups of people, existing organizations. It should be used as a tool to further the aim of organizations, rather than to go through the tremendous hassle of creating a whole new set of organizations to deal with this. We already have organizations. . . . that are doing tremendous work in all the areas we are interested in, and I think we should work through them.

One last point: I've done a little work in radio. I've found this to be a tremendously exciting thing. I'm not plugging it, I don't want to present it as the next public access, but I do want to say that radio programming is extremely cheap, that you should think about using radio in conjunction with cable. We should begin to think about communicating, not just the cable. . . . Radio is, by the way, part of cable, a tremendous number of channels that can go out over the cable. . . . Now, you speak.

**Boyling:** My name is Sid Boyling, from Winnipeg, Canada. I hesitate to come up here and talk as if I had answers, but I would like to share some of our experiences. We've been in access cable for 1½ years. What we did, we hired a program director who had no experience personally in television, but a person who was dedicated to the advancement of the community. We gave this person the status of an executive in our company. . . . The duties of this person were spelled out, but the program director was not allowed to participate in the actual production of programming for the cable system. This person had the responsibility of searching out, selling people on the idea of using media. We had a full-time production assistant in our studio. . . .

With this basis, we gave the objective to the programming director of 20 hours a week, which was met. And we have never produced a program ourselves. Our facilities are at the full use of the people. We have started in our second year with a 50% increase, and we

passed that. We're doing 40 hours a week, now. . . . We have not controlled a single program. We, too, set up regulations. They are quite simple. Number one, obey the law. Number two, obey the CRTC [Canadian Radio and Television Commission] regulations.

We've found the discipline of the people has been much greater than what we have asked of ourselves. It's been a very happy experience. Especially because we are dealing with youth. I'm old enough to be the father of everyone in here, but it's one of the most stimulating things to see people with creative approaches. . . . It's a real tribute to the people.

**Jacobsen:** We're all friends enough to be honest. . . . [To Mr. Thomas] I'm a little disappointed that you talked with NCTA and they didn't give you the name of any of the video people in the Chicago area or any of a dozen model programs which have tons of written material about very practical steps about how to involve the public in access to the media. . . . Once the floodgates are open, the momentum of access almost takes care of itself. The key is finding a sensitive person to provide a liaison between the operator and the community.

**Nick DeMartino, WCVC:** I think you [Othmer] are severely inhibited by the fact that you're analyzing New York City public access, for one thing. You imply that people shouldn't be funded to produce tapes, shouldn't be professionals. They shouldn't get money from public agencies, cable operators, tax money, etc. What does that have to do with most communities? Almost no place has ever had that happen, except New York, with the State Council on the Arts dumping lots of money into the video movement when it didn't really exist anywhere else in the world.

And in Washington, D.C. . . . we operate a storefront where we train people; we go around telling people what cable television might be and what public access is. We're media educators, if you want to call us that. We're a community media education facility. We're trying to raise the unique and in some ways rather revolutionary concept that media can be used by someone other than the people who own it. Nobody ever thought that was possible before this concept was developed. And that takes somebody, not necessarily just a technoid that comes in and does a job for somebody else, but somebody that has the idea in the first place. That doesn't mean that this is necessarily something that everybody has to do.

But somebody at this point in history had better do it, or public access will not happen. . . .

**Othmer:** Let me make a distinction between the development work and the continuation work. That's an important distinction. I do think it's very important that people do that. That's the kind of things the foundations are around for, something they do well. They start something, support it for a year or two, and then they drop it. One of the reasons I came to this realization was a purely practical one, I knew there wouldn't be a tremendous amount of funding for on-going production activity. So how can we use what little funding there is to the best advantage? I won't argue that there shouldn't be development work. There has to be people beating the bushes, saying we've got to develop this, it's important. But once that is done, I don't think we should expect to all be able to latch on to somebody's payroll as public access people. As something else, but not that.

**Janice Cohen, author of "Public Access Report":** You discuss in your report a series of meetings held in New York between the cable operators, the Office of Telecommunications and about 200 independent video producers who basically approached the Office of Telecommunications and also the cable operators and said, "we want to do something with the public access channels. We have the Video Access Center that was supposedly funded for a year; we don't know what's going to happen after that. Let's get together. Let's work on the rules together. Let's discuss ways of getting this information out to the public. And let's also have a moratorium on any changes on the public access channels until we can get together the kind of community support that is necessary in order to make any changes."

I think the problem in N.Y. was that cable was such a political issue, and there were so

many considerations, that none of the planning, none of the discussions, none of the public hearings, were ever really done.

For example, before your [Othmer's] report came out, we published *The Public Access Report*, which was meant to help people in the city make decisions about cable, know what was going on and have an idea of the history. We approached the Office of Telecommunications, requested public hearings, and nothing ever happened. There were never public hearings until TelePrompTer and Sterling Manhattan requested rate hikes, and pay TV rights. I don't feel that your recommendation is a reality in terms of the New York experience right now. What we've seen in New York City is that public access hasn't really been given a chance to develop in any kind of viable way.

**Sandy Rockowitz, Portable Channel, Rochester, N.Y.:** Several thoughts have come to mind. Rochester, N.Y. is a pre-cable community. We're working there to produce community-produced television. I think one of the things we're seeing is that the notion of community-produced television has gotten too bound up with one tool—public access. . . . But First Amendment freedoms are positive ones, and need support. In Rochester we began operating a media equipment pool three years ago. We said to the community, come on in, use our equipment, use our tape, here it is. What happened was that the portapaks got worked over. Tremendous quantities of videotape were produced and sat on our shelf because they were absolutely unwatchable. And, if we had kept going at that rate at the resources available, . . . they would have been completely dissipated.

There was a need for two reinforcing things. One is training, so that people can learn how to use the equipment. And that requires people working in access. And the second thing is that people are not used to the concept that people can make their own television programs. It's a little staggering. So therefore, the creation of models of community-produced programming is indeed very important. . . . We produce a TV show on the PBS station and we see that is a model, not just produced by staff. . . . Because of this, people aren't looking at community-produced programs as something that they want to watch, including the Sierra Club, as a matter of fact. They have gotten involved in producing their own programs. Without models of programming, training support, and staff, public access is not going to happen.

**Othmer:** Yes, that's the distinction between getting something going and keeping it going. I agree with you. Once it gets going, I think it will carry by itself.

**Orton:** What evidence are you basing that conclusion on?

**Othmer:** I don't know, maybe it won't. . . .

**DeMartino:** How can you stand up there in front of everybody now that you've been brought here, and make a grandiose conclusion, and say you have no evidence to base your major premise on? That's absurd!

**Cohen:** In what ways have you come to that conclusion based on your New York experience?

**Othmer:** Well, it hasn't you see. What I'm saying is that it hasn't because the kind of groups—like the Sierra Club, our model—have not become involved in New York City.

**Andrew Mong, Antioch College:** I'd like to say something in favor of what you've been saying, David. I think a lot of people who are doing video these days, think we're sort of setting the vanguard. We're setting up steps for others to follow us to do video. There are a lot of people doing video for the sake of video—as art. But there are a lot of people who are becoming priests in this area. They're developing their own language, they communicate among themselves. This becomes a process that completely eliminates and excludes a lot of the people who walk up and see someone on the street with a portapak and sometimes feel intimidated because these people talk to each other in this strange language, and they carry out in a way that turns them off. I've visited a lot of video groups and I tend to find a lot of elitism among the group. You walk into the facility and try to see what's going on. There's not always, I find, this open thing, where people will say—this is what I'm doing, this is how the equipment works, this is what we're about.



# Memphis women's groups begin cable programming about TVA

[MEMPHIS, from p. 8]

the same goal. Ms. Carolyn Yellin, chairwoman of the group's board, follows up on all the national implications and correspondence. She is reportedly receiving about five letters a day from universities, clubs, national organizations, and cable systems expressing some kind of interest in what they are doing in Memphis.

Ms. Rickey emphasizes that the most important elements for organizing a women's channel are the building of a firm coalition of women's groups in the community, and getting the cooperation of the cable operator for a minimal lease price, access to equipment, and a training program. An effort towards establishing an entire women's channel fit particularly well to the Memphis situation, so Ms. Rickey explained, partly because Southern women still strongly identify themselves by their club associations and community work, a tradition lending itself well to an infant volunteer organization's growth.

The Memphis group chose to lease a separate women's channel rather than plug into the public access route, for several reasons. In the Memphis case, the issue of the busing was central. Public access, which Ms. Rickey equates in kind to "talk radio," is bound to become dominated by those upset about the busing issue in the south and will become an arena of much conflict. The other wider and overriding factor in favor of a leased channel is the possibility for autonomous operation and growth, a vital consideration for any feminist group.

In terms of operational specifics, the Women's Channel of Memphis Inc. is a corporate organization now run on mostly volunteer labor. They have some access to the cable system's studio equipment and they hope to be able to get a remote truck for outside community shooting. Their immediate goals include the training of a women's crew on available 1/2" equipment and the securing of funding, via grants, for their future operations. They hope to evolve to self-sufficiency through commercial programming.

Women in Memphis have already begun a project in conjunction with the Tennessee

Valley Authority. The programs are about Day Care Centers and specifically concern their regional experiences. The women's channel will produce the tapes on 1/2" and the TVA will handle their distribution on 3/4" cassettes. They are intended to go to other cable systems. The women's CATV channel will also produce a half hour of programming per month for a local network station. The first of these programs is about abortion. This and other programs will appear on the women's channel as well as the broadcast

station when CATV operations commence in November.

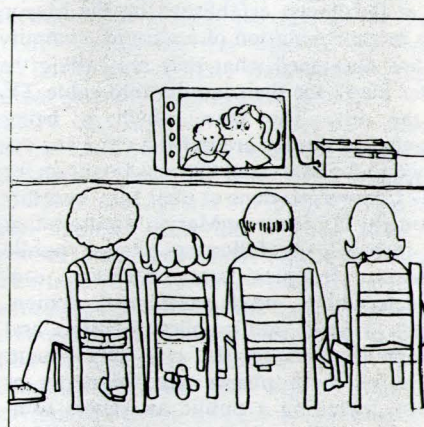
An interesting aspect in the Memphis situation is that the cable operator will have practically all of his local origination taken care of by his two leased channels, one leased by women and the other by a Black organization. There are also to be two education channels.

The women's channel of Memphis offers a booklet entitled, "How We Did It, A Log of the Early Development of the Memphis

Women's Cable T.V. Channel." To obtain it or other information contact them at:

Women in Cable, Inc.  
4241 Park Avenue  
Memphis, Tenn. 38117

There is also a group of Women in Cable, Inc., in Wash. D.C. whose efforts are going towards research and preparation for our particular cable situation here in D.C. The group needs volunteers and can be contacted through: Sally Banks Craig, 3406 Macomb St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20016.



## L.A. Public Access Project: organizing, production, education

[LOS ANGELES, from p. 9]

**Nick:** According to our theories, and the reason why we today are setting up these new centers is to change the media structure—that giving people the right to speak for themselves in itself challenges the monopoly of information by the mass media, and will consequently change its structure. Do you see that these little funky video centers that are popping up all over the country are really going to have any impact, or is it just going to be something that ultimately just takes the steam out of our movement?

**Jake:** If we don't let ourselves get co-opted. We know that we are going to be in a position where we can be co-opted, sooner or later. If we get to a point where we become very strong voices, one of two things will happen: either we are going to find very strong political pressure to stop the access movement, or else we're going to get bought out with large grants to do specific kinds of things which are going to be easier. So, we do have to keep

ourselves as pure as we can to our initial motivations for doing this: that is to make some substantial changes about the way people think about the government... and hopefully, work toward socialistic changes in this country.

**Nick:** Well, the fact of the matter is that most people working in public access aren't socialists.

**Jake:** Well, that's it. That's the reality. That's why I was saying that public access is becoming apolitical. But I still think it's an important organizing tool to use at this particular point in time.

**Nick:** You've generalized about your situation and problems, but let's get into specifics a bit more. Can we talk about Los Angeles Public Access Project?

**Jake:** The project started about two years ago out of a perceived need that there wasn't any sort of direction in the L.A. video community. So we just had a bunch of meetings with people working in media in L.A. and

formed the L.A. Public Access Project. The Board of Directors is essentially the eight people who started it. We were very lucky; within three months of starting it we got \$11,000 grant from the Episcopal Church—which was just a fluke. That went almost totally toward equipment. The initial group of the project has gone through a number of changes over the last two years, mainly because the group had come together around specific needs—access to hardware. Once that need dissipated, several smaller groups formed until a point that, for about 1 1/2 years the Project really served only as an umbrella for about four or five different projects that used the name but didn't really have any connection between themselves. It then became obvious that this structure wasn't going to work to get broad-based funding and support, so the group, six months ago, reorganized with a new board of directors and a lot tighter administrative control, to the point where there are now three of us working on the project full time.

# Update hardware report: editing, TBCs

[HARDWARE, from p. 5]

val edits. Both these machines cost \$1000 less than the 8650. (More about the vertical interval later.) So essentially you are paying an extra thousand for flying erase heads.

At the same time Sony has come out with a 3/4 inch cassette-to-cassette system which is pretty incredible. This leads me to believe that they are telling us as usual that they want to the standard to be 3/4. This system comes with a console that hooks up between two machines. You drive each machine to the edit point and cue them up. The editing console then rewinds them both an equal number of seconds and then rolls them each to five seconds before the edit point. A button is then pushed and both machines cut on simultaneously and the edit is made automatically at zero seconds. The total cost of the system—2 decks and editor—is about \$13,000.

The other new automated editing system that we saw was the TRI system made by Television Research International. It was demonstrated with two IVC 800 series one-inch editors. Their brochure on the EA-5 editing system states: "It must be frustrating for mistake makers when they come up against something as simple as the EA-5." This is true. The EA-5 would seem to be a slightly more accurate system because it counts control track pulses rather than segments of time or tape footage. It too backs the machines up rolls them forward and makes the edit, but its control panel is designed so that you can't make a mistake and push the wrong button, since they are locked in sequence. The other nice thing is that the modifications performed on the decks when the system is installed allow the tapes to be moved forward by hand allowing you to set them virtually to the frame you want. Unfortunately this system requires solenoid

operation which is not available in any half-inch machines.

## Time Base Corrector Correction

Got a little bit of egg-substitute on our face because we told you last issue that the new time-base correctors (TBC) will correct everything. Sorry 'bout that. They will not correct everything, and some reports tell us that a lot of the bugs have yet to be worked out. We have decided to get our hands on some ourselves and make some tests before we say too much more. We talked to a fellow from Microtime who confirmed what we had heard—which is that none of the current time-base correctors will consistently correct non-vertical interval switched material.

Non-what? Since video comes across in frames, there is a space between each frame. The space between them is called the vertical interval. A vertical interval switcher or editor will wait the micro second from the time you push a switch or edit button until the vertical interval is reached before making the cut. In a non-vertical interval system, the cut is made anywhere in the frame. While this might sometimes not be noticeable to the eye it sometimes appears as a slight tear in the picture. When such a tear hits a TBC it does a somersault.

The man from Microtime also informed us that if you want to insure best results you should first of all use the TBC between decks or between the SEG and the deck in original production. Even better, if your purpose in using a TBC is to get broadcast-quality material, it is better to immediately dub unedited material up to 2-inch and edit on a two-inch system. TBC's are not miracle workers, you have to feed them fairly good

material and the material should be fed to them through a processing amplifier. Some of the TBC systems now come with a proc amp built in.

If you want to broadcast you have to think of broadcast from the get-go. Your machines have to be perfectly aligned and your shooting must be done with care. The folks at TV-TV (Top Value Television) produced a tape for PBS on Soul Rush '73 in which they started with half-inch and edited on 2" quad. They used a proc amp and a CVS 500 corrector and dubbed all the segments they wanted to 2" and then did the edit. Still, such things as drastic change in light levels during a shot caused problems. (When you have for instance a bright white poster as they had, or a camera pan going from light to dark, the gain control in the camera tries to compensate and does not stabilize fast enough causing a disruption in the synchronization pulse of the picture. This error will appear even after time base correction.)

There are about ten TBCs on the market now, and the technology will probably become much more sophisticated. There is one marketed by Kansas State Network which is about a quarter of the price of the rest and is designed for cable origination rather than broadcast. Our suspicion is that the best one will be the one by 3M because many of their broadcast products are the standard of the business. We have heard that they like to be sure of their broadcast products before they come out with them. The 3M corrector is also one of the most expensive.

## FURTHER READING

*Petersen's Guide to Video Tape Recording* by Charles Bensinger: Petersen Publishing Co. 8490 Sunset Blvd. Los Angeles, Ca. 90069.

This is one book in a series by this publisher on film, video and photography. We came across it at the corner news stand, which was quite a surprise. It happened at a point when we were groaning at the fact that we would have to develop our own manual for our classes. The book is only two bucks and it covers almost every aspect of half-inch video. It is written extremely simply, with tons of illustration. It starts off with a discussion of the concepts of the video movement and then goes on to the electronics of image formation. Then there are chapters on portapacs, editing systems, sound, light, plugs, wires, interchangeability of tape, monitors, etc. All the common Sony and Panasonic systems are gone through with diagrams of their controls and step by step procedures as to operation. There are lots of simple little tips that we never knew about before. We are currently using this as a text for our workshops in half-inch production. The book is mainly geared to equipment procedure and does not go into aspects of scripting, nor studio type systems, but as far as it goes it is quite excellent.

*Designing and Maintaining the CATV and Small T.V. Studio*, Kenneth Knecht, Tab Books, Blue Ridge Summit, Pa. 17214

This book is geared towards the slightly more formal studio situation and contains a lot of information on more sophisticated components such as wave-form monitors, and special effect generators. There is a good deal of theory but not too much to boggle the mind of the beginner. For someone who is going to either build or consider building a studio type operation even if it is a low budget half-inch system I would recommend the book as it gives a sober picture of what you are getting into. As with most books in the field, developments and new equipment are rapidly exceeding the publishers ability to keep up with them. Thus, the book does not cover low budget color systems and such things as Time Base Correctors. But if you plan to talk to people who sell such items, the book will give you a reference point and some basic knowledge upon which to base questions.

*Video Tape Production and Communication Techniques* Lawrence Efrein, Tab Books.

This book is geared towards the studio production format. It deals with all the production and directing questions such as lighting, talent placement, pacing the program, scripting and camera movement. While a lot of the techniques seem conservative or old fashioned, it is good to know the rules of thumb before departing from them. Often times public access folks do not understand why people find it hard to sit through tapes. The fact is that people have become accustomed to a certain format and although departures can be made and people can adjust to new styles it is good to get into some of the thinking involved in the textbook approach as it is based on a lot of experience.



# Metro Cable Roundup

## City of Baltimore offers 'master plan'

The Office of Telecommunications for the City of Baltimore, established by the Mayor upon recommendation of a citizens' committee, has developed what they are calling "a master plan" for their inquiry into cable TV for the city. The plan, which is being presented to groups around the city, was explained to the Maryland Citizens Coalition for Cable Communications at their May monthly meeting by OT Director Marvin Rimmerman.

It includes the following phases: public awareness, technical state-of-the-art, economic feasibility, needs assessment, demonstration projects, public policy questions, and recommendations to the city government. Several of these phases are underway at present, including a public awareness campaign that will produce materials for distribution, slide and live presentations to citizens' groups. The Office expects to finish all phases by July, 1975.

Expected soon is the final report of the economic feasibility study undertaken by Johns Hopkins University's Metro Center with funds from the National Science Foundation. Dr. Catherine Lyall, project director, has indicated some parts of the report may be at odds with the city's Office of Telecommunications. Details, however, are currently being ironed out. The report, in addition to studying the financial feasibility of cable for the city, looks at some utilization of CATV, particularly educational and municipal services.

## CATV held practical in Montgomery Co.

The second of three reports by Montgomery County's \$40,000 consultant, Malarky, Taylor, was released last month, concluding that CATV is viable for the Washington suburban county, the nation's richest. The most "inno-

vative" recommendation concerns a point-to-point "special services network" for the county that would operate separately from the home subscriber CATV system.

The primary concern of this study is economic feasibility. Malarky, Taylor claims that its research indicates that a CATV system in Montgomery Co. could attain one-third of the homes passed as subscribers at a rate of \$7/month. This would extend service to about 90% of the "wireable area" of the county. Services offered over the projected 30-channel system would be the standard mix of over-the-air signals, required access channels, local origination, and "automated" channels. No special services are described.

The question of ownership is deemed not to be as crucial by MTA as "penetration levels and capital requirements." Thus, either public or private ownership would be acceptable. Public ownership is, however, "considered more favorable economically."

The final Montgomery County report was due after our deadline. We will devote a major article in the next issue of *CVR* to cable development in Montgomery County.

## Arlington postpones video test projects

The Arlington County Board has postponed consideration of three videotape projects designed to test possible municipal service utilization of the upcoming cable TV system until its first July meeting. The projects, recommended by the interdepartmental CATV Task Force of the County government, involve the County Library and other agencies.

The primary reason for the delay is uncertainty concerning the Federal Communications Commission approval of Arlington's franchise agreement with ARTEC, Inc., which has been pending for a year now. ARTEC claims that the needed certificate of compliance is forthcoming shortly.

The County's Program Advisory Board continues to hold public information meetings about CATV in Arlington.

## Educating Washington about cable TV

City Councilwoman Antoinette Ford and members of the Executive Committee of the CATV Education Task Force for D.C. are in the process of "shopping around" a \$24,748 proposal that would fund a four-month community education process concerning the issue of CATV in Washington.

Task Force Chairman Curt White, other members of the Committee, and Ms. Ford, have set up meetings with representatives of several foundations and organizations that might be interested in supporting the work, which is preliminary to City Council hearings and the ordinance-franchising process.

Although Ms. Ford, as head of the committee for Economic Development of the Council, has supported the Education Task Force, official endorsement by the full Council is pending.

## Project Accountability

Will Cable TV come to Anacostia? If so, who will control, produce and finance it? These were questions Anacostians asked Curtis White at a recent workshop conducted by Project Accountability, an Anacostia-based videotaping project. White, head of a citywide task force on Cable in D.C., heard Anacostians express concern about Cable: costs, slick programming that doesn't touch the survival interests of people, and the job market that cable would or wouldn't create.

The workshop was initiated by Project Accountability staff as another thrust of its effort to "demystify" the media for the community and open the door for more community-produced TV programs.

## Publicable conference

"Cable for Action 1974" is the title of the third annual Publicable national conference, scheduled for June 9-11 at Mt. Vernon College in Washington.

Publicable is a "nonprofit consortium to stimulate public interest and awareness in cable television developments."

This year's event features a schedule of panels on major national issues in cable, as well as progress on the local level by churches, schools, libraries, public and municipal access groups. Some 80 "experts" have been slated for participation, including representatives from federal agencies, foundation-funded Washington cable bureaucracies, foundations, and other establishment types concerned with cable policy. Some screening of videotapes is also planned.

Pre-Registration deadline was May 26. However, local people interested in attending can call 202-381-6644 or 833-4108 for details. The cost is \$30/members, \$35/non-members, \$15/students. Housing and meals are extra.

## WCVC promotes local programs to FCC

The Washington Community Video Center has submitted comments to the FCC concerning their proposed rulemaking in the matter of requiring CATV systems to originate programming.

The 10-page comment recommends that the Commission, in addition to the current rules governing the channel space for "public access channels," should require *all* CATV systems in the U.S. to "either devote a percentage of their gross revenues (probably 5%) to the establishment of a community television facility that will actively promote, explain, and help prepare the public to use the public access channel" as an alternative to the CATV systems own local origination.

WCVC makes the point that local origination and public access are often one and the same thing—locally produced programming, and that the key issue is finding a way to build an economic base for such community-produced television.

Full comments are available on request from WCVC for \$.50 and a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

## (HEALTH, from p. 5)

University, described the diet of television programming they provide their patients through the day. They use channels on the same master antenna system that brings regular broadcast T.V. to the patients' rooms. While this puts them in direct competition with network programs, they have found an audience. They repeat certain programs over and over during the week so that while at one point they might lose out to "Secret Storm" they might beat out "I Love Lucy" later in the day.

A key element in all this is staff follow-up and viewer encouragement. Upon checking into the hospital, patients are informed of the video service. Staff are aware of the programming and many are prepared to answer questions that the programming might bring out.

One clear point that I gathered from the discussion is that the big push for patient education is coming much more from nurses and para-professionals than from the doctors. This would seem logical since these are the folks who often spend more time with the patient.

Another clear point was the need for evaluation of health communications processes. Saul Jacobs of Southerland Learning Associates discussed the exhaustive pre-production process they launch before undertaking any filming. Currently they are producing a series of programs designed to get kids to take on health responsibility. They are interviewing kids, teachers, parents, administrators, doctors, nurses, etc. A pre-distribution pilot will then be shown and evaluated as to its effect on the student's habits. If more work is needed more production will be undertaken. It is obvious from viewing many materials that many producers are functioning in a vacuum without this type of feedback. Often times producers grab a hot issue, like drug abuse, and start cranking out films. Institutional

media buyers likewise buy all kinds of things without really knowing what their effect will be.

Several years ago, I led some drug abuse workshops at high schools and junior high schools. At one, the teacher insisted showing one such film to the students, who laughed their way through it, pointing out the inaccuracies. Most students were much more familiar with the material than the producers. **Dayton Area Health Network**

In contrast to producing in a vacuum, the Dayton-Miami consortium of colleges is planning to plug into the local cable systems with Continuing Health Education courses. They have received a grant from the Office of Education to develop programming for "non-traditional learners." The consortium, in cooperation with the area health department, has put together a citizen task force to help identify both the learners to be served and the needs to be met. This task force is made up of both laypersons and health workers, who jointly decide on program content. One of the first things brought up was the fact that learning through CATV could be dehumanizing. Thus, rethinking was done and a new plan is being devised which will combine an hour of CATV programming with two hours of either interactive or tutorial learning. The first program that has been completed is a mini course on vital signs. Unfortunately, since talking with Martin Evers of the consortium and people at the health department, half of the cable system in Xenia, where the program was to begin, was destroyed by tornadoes. Hopefully, the program will begin again when the more immediate problems are dealt with.

Without careful consideration and citizen input, investment in health communications could easily be a waste of money. Microwave, computers, and cable are not miracle machines. It is still human beings that control them. If people feel that they are being dehumanized by technology, their alienation

will derail the program, no matter what the intentions. There is no replacement for human contact and involvement. The hope is that technology will free more time for health providers to spend with patients. Several new studies are now coming out detailing work being done in the areas of health and telecommunications applications, some with good discussions of the human issues involved.

### National Center for Health Education

As reported last issue, somewhere in the works is the developing National Center for Health Education. Progress on the structuring and location are still unresolved. We've heard that some folks within the health administration want it to be in Washington, and others, under the Disease Control Center in Atlanta. It's hard to say who is involved at this point and who will make the decision. In his health message to Congress the President asked for the establishment of the Center, but I didn't see a specific funding allocation in the budget. He also asked that an office be set up within H.E.W. to coordinate all "currently existing health education programs." It was brought to my attention by an aide on Capitol Hill that "existing" is a nice way to say "no new programs."

### Activated Patient Video Available

We are currently finishing up a video tape on the Activated Patient Program being conducted by Dr. Sehnert through the Georgetown University Health Maintenance program. The course has now received major press notice in *Newsweek* and *Parade* magazines. The videotape is designed to give a glimpse of one of the classes with a few interviews. One of the nice things depicted is the fact that folks taking the course have taken their stethoscopes and blood pressure devices home so that they could test their neighbors for hypertension, and the twenty or so students found ten cases. The one thing that is

clear from the program is that health consumers do want information and can handle and use information in large doses. (The course is 32 hours, spread out over a 17 week period).

### Further Resources

*Perspectives on Interactive Health Services* by Joe Nocero, Mitre Corporation, McLean, Va.

This is a good introduction to the applications of complicated technology to basic problems. It emphasizes the interaction between health provider and health client. There is a short discussion of a program called "Project AMOS" which is a computer-assisted diagnostic tool that lends itself easily to cable and microwave technology.

*Serving Local Needs with Telecommunications* by William Lucas and Robert K. Yin available from the Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, Ca. 90406.

This report deals almost exclusively with social service delivery via telecommunications. It does something which has not been done before which is to compare the differences between an urban and semi-rural situation. Using Somerville, Mass., as one location, a suburban situation is discussed. The report deals with the characteristics of the population, cable system and municipal planning and then describes the health needs and then the design for communication research to be done within the system.

In the second part of the report, Loudoun County, Va., is discussed. This is an area which does not lend itself to the development of CATV because of the distance between population centers, and the good reception of over-the-air TV signals. Here services are discussed which might use phone lines and microwave. It is a thoughtful study.

*Guide to Audio-Visual Aids for Spanish Speaking DHEW* No. (HSA) 7430 Public Inquiries Section, Health Services Administration, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Md. 20852.

*Association-Sterling Films*, CRM educational division, 10011 Camino del Mar, Del Mar, Ca. 92014.

We have just previewed several of their films on both health and the behavioral sciences. Films we saw were excellent both in terms of technical production quality and information. Their films on heart attack combined strong dramatic material with research supporting evidence on the causes and cures for heart disease. One possible use for the films would be to feature them on a Cable T.V. system while setting up special hypertension testing centers at the same time. The films are a good community resource and should be purchased by libraries and health agencies so that they might become more available to the public.

*Telemedicine: Current Experience* 250 pages, Report on current experience and thinking in interactive T.V. for provision of health care. Write Alternate Media Center, 144 Bleeker Street, N.Y., N.Y. 10012.



## (ROCKVILLE, from p. 1)

Despite this "lack of a groundswell" for CATV in Rockville, as City Manager Larry Blick puts it, the city has been studying cable for several years. As early as July, 1971, Rockville City Council created the Ad Hoc Committee to Study Cable, a citizens' group which sought to determine CATV's economic feasibility in Rockville. The Ad Hoc Committee included a communications lawyer, who later bought stock in telcoR, an assistant to then-FCC Commissioner Dean Burch, and a member who later resigned to become a City Councilman. Both in an interim report and in its final report, the Ad Hoc Committee supported the establishment of a Rockville CATV system.

But two months before the Committee even published its March 1973 final report, telcoR had been incorporated as a profit-making organization whose aim was to win at CATV franchise and establish a CATV system in Rockville. TelcoR boasts all its members are residents of Rockville. These include a former Rockville mayor, a newly-elected City Councilman, two past Chairmen of the Rockville Chamber of Commerce, and two members of the Rockville Black Coalition. Additionally, several leaders in Rockville's two main non-partisan political organizations—Citizens for Good Government (CGG) and Independents for Rockville (IfR)—are members of telcoR. Lee G. Lovett, a long-time resident of Rockville, and a member of the Washington communications law firm of Pittman, Lovett, Ford, and Hennessey, is also a shareholder in telcoR.

TelcoR's opponents point out that similar groups of community leaders were organized into CATV corporations by Fred Ford in Arlington, Baltimore, Prince Georges, and Montgomery Counties. Ford is not a shareholder in telcoR, however.

The practice of getting local citizens to sponsor CATV corporations, in an effort to appear community-based, appears common among multiple systems operators (MSOs). According to the May 2, 1973 *Wall Street Journal*, "the first thing any cable operator does is put together a group of locally influential people. . . . You always assess a community on the basis of who's got the muscle." The article continues, "To land a franchise, applicants figure they need much more than just technical know-how. Lots of capital is essential. Timing can be crucial—tying up a town's best lawyers and most influential citizens quickly, perhaps by offering them a chance to buy stock. And it sometimes helps if some of the decision-makers are good friends of the applying group."

Lorenzo Ricks, telcoR Vice President for Community Relations and defeated CGG candidate for City Council, notes that over 75% of telcoR's stock is owned by people who live or work in Rockville. "I wouldn't say it's outside control," he commented.

### Cronyism charged

Conflict of interest has become a major accusation in Rockville's CATV debate. At public hearings held July 1973 one citizen testifying asked "Are not those applying for franchise personal, social or political acquaintances or friends of the Mayor and Council?"

The hearings were opened with testimony from telcoR members, including a former member of the Ad Hoc Committee to Study Cable, and a former Rockville mayor. TelcoR was also represented by Fred Ford at those hearings, as well as by a member of the consulting firm they'd hired to study cable.

Although Ford told the Council that CATV "is now more profitable than ever," further testimony challenged that assertion. The Citizens for Good Government, testifying against CATV, noted that the city might be burdened with high supervisory costs, or even operating costs, should the system fail. The CGG doubted that the city could cover these expenses. TelcoR, however, claims the city can adopt an ordinance which will protect it from possible failure.

Citizen testimony on cable TV at the hearings was almost evenly split pro and con. However, many of those testifying in favor of going ahead with a CATV system were either members of telcoR or telcoR-connected. For example, both the Chamber of Commerce and the City's Economic Development Council, favorable to CATV in the hearings, have members who are shareholders in telcoR.

Despite initial CATV enthusiasm among some Council members, the City Council decided to defer consideration of cable. Encouraging deferment was a pessimistic forecast for Rockville CATV by the Mitre Corporation, which had contracted with the City to study cable feasibility in Rockville. The \$20,000 report projected low rates of return, high costs, and low rates of penetration.

TelcoR objected to Mitre's conclusions, citing their own consultant's study. The corporation sent a letter to the City Council in June, 1973, noting inaccurate data, and a lack of specific experience in "fringe" markets on Mitre's part. TelcoR's study had used data specifically from Rockville, which projected a favorable growth rate.

In defense of cable, telcoR argued that distant signal importation from New York, as well as opportunities for local expression, would attract viewers. Because Rockville has no local daily newspaper or television station, "a medium for local expression" is necessary.

According to Ed Steers, telcoR president, "Mitre never said it [cable] would go broke or bankrupt." Instead, he noted, the report said cable TV in Rockville could not achieve a rate of return that would attract investment. But Steers observed that several groups have already expressed an interest in the Rockville franchise, and said "Target rate of return is in the eye of the beholder."

Steers claims telcoR is willing to take the risk. "We'd be fools to go into this without financial backing," he says. TelcoR has already invested money in its own feasibility study. As a result, Steers notes that lenders have made a commitment to telcoR. "It's a risk we're willing to take," declares Lorenzo Ricks.

But Roald Schrack, a Rockville citizen activist and member of the Citizens' Advisory Committee on Cable for Montgomery County, disagrees with telcoR's financial analysis. "They have no money," he claims, saying that it would take approximately 1.5 million dollars to establish CATV in Rockville. Schrack feels telcoR will sell stock to outsiders in order to acquire necessary financing, as other CATV companies have done.

### City, county or state?

Conflicting views exist as to whether or not a CATV system is inevitable in Rockville. Both telcoR members and telcoR opponents feel Rockville will eventually have some sort of system. But citizen Schrack feels the immediate future is not very bright for cable.

Despite Schrack's pessimism, passage of a city ordinance regulating the franchising and operation of a cable system appears imminent. Part of the pressure comes from widespread fear of county or state pre-emption of Rockville's franchising authority. Montgomery County is currently studying cable options and there is pressure to pass an ordinance before the County elections this November. This spring, the Maryland statehouse considered several bills to give the State franchising authority. The bills died in committee, and a two-year study was commissioned instead.

Currently municipalities have authority to grant cable franchises based on their regulation of rights-of-way permits. Several states have passed laws giving states that authority. The state role has been limited to technical assistance, interconnection policy, and cable capability.

TelcoR members are particularly wary of pre-emption. "The city could take steps to protect its authority," says telcoR President Steers. Real antagonism between the city and county exists, although Rockville is the county seat. Thus, the city would naturally be an important part of any county cable system. TelcoR's Lorenzo Ricks asks "Where does one prefer control to rest," with the city or county government?

But Schrack feels city vs. county control is a moot point. He expects that the city will retain control of any CATV system operating in Rockville. The pre-emption issue, Schrack believes, is one designed to push through favorable CATV legislation by appealing to city loyalty.

A county franchise might be "less valuable" to other CATV companies, according to Schrack, if a franchise were awarded in Rockville first. A cable company affiliated with the Rockville company, on the other hand, would benefit most from the county franchise. A group involving Fred Ford appears interested in the county franchise.

(Baltimore County awarded a cable franchise to another Ford group, CALTEC. It has been challenged by citizens' groups, and Baltimore TV stations. One charge is that "Baltimore County did not comply with [Federal Communications] Commission rules when they awarded the franchise to Caltec," says David Fleming, FCC officer studying the challenge.

Another Ford group, ARTEC, was also awarded a franchise for Arlington County. That franchise has been challenged by Washington television stations. A review should be out in a month, and the full Commission should decide upon granting a certificate of compliance in two months, according to the FCC officer reviewing the ARTEC case.)

With the argument that possible pre-



FORMER FCC Chairman Fred Ford

emption would be avoided, Rockville Councilman Robert Bryan introduced an ordinance drafted by a telcoR member this March, one month prior to the city elections. When the question of possible conflict of interest was raised by other council members, Bryan noted that he could have used the Baltimore County ordinance instead.

The franchise application of the Baltimore County ordinance is nearly identical with the ordinance Bryan introduced. It differs in two important respects, however: 1) requirements for planned rate schedules and proposed additional services and fees are excluded, and 2) the part stating how the cable company plans to pay the city for the franchise is deleted.

But because precedent often inhibits innovation—as in the case of television station license renewals, which are virtually automatic—many in Rockville are reluctant to go ahead and pass an ordinance. The past city council decided to postpone consideration of a cable ordinance until the new council came in. Supporting public hearings on the ordinance prior to the election were Bryan, and Councilman William Hanna, then running for mayor, who had been critical of CATV at last summer's hearings.

One Councilman, George Northway, who had originally supported public hearings, changed his mind on the issue. It was charged that the mayor, a supporter of CATV who became a critic during the summer hearings, had lobbied Northway over the telephone, in violation of the principle of public Council meetings.

Pre-emption by the state, which was considering CATV legislation at the time, was actually a false issue, since the proposed bills would only exempt CATV systems with headends already in operation. As Rockville had no CATV system, it would have fallen under state jurisdiction, had the measures passed.

Although it was an issue within the City Council, cable was not a major campaign issue in the City Council election this fall. "I wish it had been an issue," said telcoR President Ed Steers, since it would have given CATV public exposure. But because "members of both political parties were involved in telcoR," discussion of CATV was precluded, since telcoR members "had to remain neutral."

Roald Schrack feels that this was exactly the problem. "Cable could never surface as an issue" because of telcoR's participation in both Citizens for Good Government and Independents for Rockville. "This effectively prevented telcoR from being an issue," he says, because "the pot couldn't call the kettle black."

A telcoR member was, in fact, elected to the city council. But because he is a member,

"I can't make any decisions now," John Freeland declared. It would be "unethical for me to promote telcoR." Freeland plans to physically remove himself from the Council when CATV is discussed. He noted that he has not attended a telcoR board meeting since he declared himself a candidate for city council.

However, telcoR opponents think Freeland is likely to be influential behind the scenes. Although Freeland will not vote on CATV issues, his mere presence on the City Council is viewed as a threat. The fact that candidates from telcoR ran on both parties' slates is seen as a sign of the importance of a City Council seat to telcoR.

"Cable cuts across party lines," says defeated CGG candidate Frank Gospodarek. He observed that six members of telcoR are also members of the CGG executive board. "All are the key to elections in this town," he remarked.

He said that in the one district where cable was explained as an issue to city residents, the CGG won. This was the only district CGG carried. Despite his success in that district, Gospodarek admits "cable was never a public issue in this campaign."

The direction the new City Council will go is unclear. County pressure may encourage the City Council to hold further public hearings and pass an ordinance on cable. Additionally, the city may present testimony at county hearings in the very near future.

Cable as an issue isn't likely to fade any, however, particularly because the Washington area is a communications center. Already a center for printing and publishing, Washington could prove highly lucrative to the cable industry.

Communications specialist Stan Klein notes that predictions for 1990 are that the cable industry will be as important, and as influential, as the phone company.

### Facts, not funnies

The reason for this growth is not expanded "home entertainment," but rather the transmission of information. In the next ten years, Klein comments, industry predicts that 80% of all cable will be for data transmission, while only 15 to 20% will be for entertainment.

For example, Klein says, domestic satellites will need CATV as a local distribution system for satellite programs. Data communication via CATV "will result in a huge windfall profit to whoever owns the right to develop the system at that time. That 'right' is basically the CATV franchise. All a CATV franchise holder would need to do is to hang on for 5 years while the technology develops and then ride the technology trend into very substantial profits."

The reason cable is so attractive is that the frequency spectrum is running out. The airways are already crowded, as they are on a narrow frequency. "Cable permits you to re-use the spectrum," Klein observes, by utilizing a switched network, like the phone company.

The fact that Western Union announced the launching of DOMSAT, its domestic communications satellite, this past month, emphasizes the need for on-the-ground distributing systems of satellite communications. The World Football League, for example, currently has no network options, and could choose to broadcast via satellite. CATV systems would be necessary to receive WFL games.

TelcoR members are largely silent on the issue of data transmission. Freeland admits that cable is not restricted to entertainment: the possibility for "all kinds of local involvement" is present. "One of the reasons we are so high on cable in Rockville," says Steers, is "there is obviously a whole field of activities."

But the issue of cable television has been lost in the controversy surrounding telcoR. The participation of telcoR members in the very processes of Rockville's government and political system raise doubts as to whether telcoR is actually acting in the best interests of the public. Former FCC Commissioner Fred Ford's involvement with the group also creates suspicion of telcoR, as Ford-connected CATV companies appear to be gobbling up Washington area cable franchises. The vast potential uses cable television companies once promised local communities are finally being tempered by practical considerations. The fruit of the controversy in Rockville may give us a foretaste of things to come.



# NCTA video environmentors

The following is a list of people who registered at the NCTA video environment. While it is certainly not exhaustive of video people, or even close, it is, to the best of our knowledge, the most up-to-date list available. Other catalogs and listings like *Radical Software* and *Video Exchange* are over 6 months old—the death cycle for many groups and also for address changes. Thus, we are printing this list for those of you who want to contact each other. Maybe someday we'll get comprehensive.

DAVID R. AFFELDER, 5528 S. Everett, Chicago IL 60637, (312) 684-4994, HumVideo - U. of Chicago, also freelance sales of vertical interval switching products.

ALTERNATE MEDIA CENTER, 144 Bleecker St., NY NY 10012 (Robert Pinto)

BOB APFEL, Oberlin Student, Box 73, Oberlin OH 44074, New York State Urban Dev Corp.

VANCE ARCHER, 4900 S. Ellis Ave., Chicago, IL 60615 (312) 548-2239 HumVideo - U. of Chicago

ANDY BEECHER, Comax Telcom Corp., 850 Elk St., Buffalo, NY 14210. (716) 826-9000. Cable TV company also Media Study Inc.

GLENN BLANC, 1218 Steele St., Denver, CO 80206, (303) 322-0558, Denver Community Video Center.

SID BOYLING, Box 806, Winnipeg, Manitoba, CANADA. CCTA

ELAINE BROWN, 74 VanCortlandt Park, SO, Bronx, NY 10462, Senior Citizen Closed Circuit Video Project, Women's InterArt Center, Rutt-Etra Video Synthesizer Workshop.

JOSEPH BUSCH, 4160 W. Genesee St., Fayetteville, NY 13066, (315) 637-8443, SYNAPSE—Cable network at Syracuse Univ., Innervation Media System Inc.

MATTHEW CLARKE, 6440 Elibank Dr., Elkridge MD 21227 (301) 725-3054, Kamaste Assoc, CCTV-CATV production and consulting, especially work with older people.

JANICE COHEN, 177 Hudson St. 7th floor, NY, NY 10013, (212) 925-3524, Independent video producer/director/consultant. Directing a 1/2 hour 1 inch color videotape for Mt. Sinai Sch of Med on Women's Health, author of *Public Access Report*.

COMMUNITY MEDIA, Box 24272, St. Louis, MO 63130, Eric von Schrader (314) 863-3861, Sarah Linquist (314) 771-5405, Neil Goldstein (314) 721-8488. We use video and other media in various community projects including production wkshps with teenagers, serv progs for community agencies and documentaries.

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ERIC S. FRIEDMAN, 5098 Westminister Place, St. Louis MO 63108, (314) 361-7430, Mediaware, Inc.

VIRGINIA GREENMAN, Univ. Commun. Video Ctr., Minneapolis, Minn.

MICHELE GOLDSTEIN, Com. Video Exchge, 814 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, Wisc. 53233 (414) 765-0234.

NEIL W. GOLDSTEIN, 34 Washington Terr., St. Louis, MO 63112, (314) 721-8488

ANNA L. HALSEY, 1229 Clarkson Apt #2, Denver, CO 80218, Denver Com. Video Ctr. (Women's Media Group)

MARK HEIWE, Chicago Public Schools

CHUCK HENER, Portable Channel

KATE HUDGENS, Input: Com. Video Ctr., 1015 W. Mitchell St., Milwaukee, Wisc. 53204

MARILYN HUSTEDT, Univ. Comm. Video Ctr., Mpls, Minn.

MAURICE JACOBSEN, 1800 Berkeley St., Santa Monica, CA 90404, L.A. Public Access Project. 1802 Berkeley St., Santa Monica, CA 90404, (213) 828-9800. ED JOHNSON, 2832 N. Calvert St., Balt. MD 21218 (235-0944), Antioch College Cable TV Proj.

DENNIS KARLSTAD, 3160 Lewiston, Berkeley, CA 94705, (415) 658-1505, Continuing Education Software.

ANN KAWELL, Open Media, Chicago, Ill, 600 W. Fullerton, 60614

KATHY KINDERMAN, Continental Cablevision, 15 Pleasant St., Concord, N.H., (603) 224-1984, Prog. Direct. for local org.

KATIE KING, Univ. Com. Video Ctr., Mpls, Minn.

STEPHEN KULCZYCKI, Studio A Rarig Ctr., Univ. of Minn., Mpls, Minn 55455, (612) 373-9838, Univ. Com. Video Ctr.

DENNIS LASZUK, 4737 N. Sayre Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60656 Art. Instit. of Chicago, Michigan and Adams St.

DINAH LeHOVEN, P.O. Box 94, Fairborn, Ohio 45324, Catalyst Com. Inc., UNET

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DAN LOGAN, Hyde Parker Magazine

TERRY LYNCH, Video Waveform Alchemy, 4445 W. Wrightwood Ave., Chicago, ILL 60639, 772-5347

JIM LYONS, 1106 Union, St. Louis, MO 63113, (314) 682-4545, St. Louis Public Library

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TRIBE, INC., Box #1011, Madison, Wi. 53701, Ms. Marion F. Brown

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CAROL WAEGLE, St. Mary's High School, Chicago, Ill.

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MICHAEL WILLNER, 14 Dudley St., Cambridge, Mass. 02140

VIDEO WAVEFORM ALCHEMY, Jim Wiseman, 1741 Catalpa, Chicago, Ill 60640 (312) 728-7944

JANET YONEHIRO, UCVC, Minn. Raul A. Laritzky, 1837 So. Halsted, Chicago, ILL 60608

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## Access to TV proposal

Committee for Open Media, San Jose group that started "free speech messages" on the West Coast, is working with Citizens Communications Center in D.C. to develop a plan to "institutionalize" access on broadcast television as an alternative to the fairness doctrine. Their preliminary plan would have the station provide a certain amount of time guaranteed in advance for representatives of various classes of people. There would be rules assuring broadcast during periods that would reach a significant audience, as well as a petition procedure for groups that didn't fit a category. The FCC is considering restructuring the Fairness Doctrine, which is the method now used to redress grievances by parties who claim that television only covers "one side" of a controversial issue.

## Video Expo in Chicago

The first "Video Systems Exposition and Conference," billed as the largest trade show for video products, is being held at Chicago's McCormick Place, June 9-12, 1974. Organizers' promo material suggest some 40,000 participants, which sounds like an overwhelming event. For those who have attended the NCTA, NAB, AECT and other conferences for their hardware exhibits, this one might be redundant, although it appears from

the advance literature that this Video Expo is going to be much more comprehensive than any of the other trade shows that focus on just one aspect of the growing video market.

The Expo will feature hardware, software, programming and accessory suppliers; a library with "hundreds" of video cartridge/cassette programs for individual viewing; and a

"showcase theatre" with demonstrations of video techniques and applications by "professionals" (equipment salesmen, perhaps?).

There is NO FEE (!!) for Video Exposition only, and \$22.50 for the entire package of theatre, screenings, sessions, breakfast, cocktails, etc. Register in advance 331 Madison Avenue, NY. 10017.

## Summer Workshop Registration

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of payment enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Payment must be made before 1st class)

I wish to enroll in the following workshop(s):

☐ Saturday morning, Beginners Workshop, Beginning June 22

☐ Saturday Beginners Workshop Starts August 3

☐ Tuesday Evening, Beginners Workshop Beginning July 9

☐ Tuesday Evening Beginners Workshop Starts August 20

☐ Intermediate Women's Workshop, July 15

☐ Intermediate Workshop (Mixed) Date Open

All Saturday classes held 10 a.m. through 1 p.m.

All Tuesday evening classes 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

## WCVC ARTS QUESTIONNAIRE

Simultaneous with production of the series on Washington artist, a distribution system for the tapes is being established. Those who think they may be interested in this series please complete the questions below:

Name, type of organization \_\_\_\_\_

Use you would have for these videotapes \_\_\_\_\_

Format you prefer: ☐ 3/4" cassette ☐ 1/2" reel-to-reel other \_\_\_\_\_

☐ black and white ☐ color

If you are a museum using video, are you interested in establishing an exchange? \_\_\_\_\_

How are you presently using video in the arts? \_\_\_\_\_